

Protestant Philology  
Vol 10  
1999  
G. K. V. Parthasarathy







028647





028647



RME  
N 0.  
JRN  
D  
PAR

S. B.  
SUN

l. X  
n. 1  
uary



ivers





078647

# Indian Philosophical Quarterly

FORMERLY 'THE PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY' □ NEW SERIES  
N 0376-415X

JOURNAL OF THE PRATAP CENTRE OF PHILOSOPHY, AMALNER  
D  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, POONA UNIVERSITY, POONA

## EDITORS

S. BARLINGAY,  
SUNDARA RAJAN,

RAJENDRA PRASAD,  
MRINAL MIRI,

M. P. MARATHE  
S. S. DESHPANDE

Vol. XVI

No. 1

January 1989



University of Poona

Vol 16

1989

A

311109

पुस्तकालय

RT-01290

15

C



**Editors**

**S. S. Barlingay**, ( Professor Emeritus, Poona University ), **Rajendra Prasad**, (Rtd. Professor, Patna), **M. P. Marathe** (Poona University), **R. Sundara Rajan** (Poona University), **Mrinal Miri** (NEHU, Shillong), **S. S. Deshpande** ( Poona University )

**Board of Consulting Editors :**

**G. N. Mathrani** ( Bombay ), **Daya Krishna** (Rajasthan University) **Shibjeevan Bhattacharya** ( Calcutta University ), **K. J. Shah** (Karnataka University), **R. C. Pandeya** ( Delhi University ), **D. P. Chattopadhyaya** ( Jadavpur University ), **G. N. Joshi** (Poona University). **D. Y. Deshpande** ( Nagpur University ), **J. de Marneffe** ( Poona ). **Dharmendra Kumar** (Delhi University), **R. C. Gandhi** ( Delhi ), **J. Khwaja** ( Aligarh Muslim University ), **S. A. Shaida** ( I. I. T., Kanpur ), **Roop Rekha Verma** ( Lucknow University ), **S. K. Saxena** ( Delhi University ), **S. V. Bokil** ( Poona University ), **R. A. Sinari** ( I. I. T., Bombay ), **R. K. Gupta** ( Delhi University ), **R. Balasubramanian** ( Madras University ), **S. R. Kawle** ( Poona University ), **Ranveer Singh** ( J. N. University, Imphal ), **V. K. Bhargdwaja** ( Delhi University ), **Ashok Gangadean** ( Haverford College, USA ).

Articles in this Journal are indexed in the **Philosopher's Index**, **U. S. A.**, **Repertoire Bibliographique De Philosophie**, **Belgium**, and **Indian Documentation Service**, **Gurgaon Haryana**).

Articles for publication, Books for Review, and other communications pertaining to publications, Book-reviews, subscriptions, I. P. Q. Publications, etc. may be sent to :

**The Editor, Indian Philosophical Quarterly, Department of Philosophy, Poona University, Pune 411 007, India.**

**Subscription to be sent to :**

Editor, Indian Philosophical Quarterly (by Cash or by Cheque)

• Change of Address and/or non-receipt of an issue of the Journal may be intimated within a month of the date of Publication

• **Life Membership :**

Individuals : Rs. 300/- (in India) \$ 75.00 ( outside India )

Institutions : Rs. 1500/- ( in India ) \$ 150/- ( outside India )

• **Annual Subscriptions :**

Individuals : Rs. 30 ( Rs. 35/- by cheque ) \$ 25.00

Institutions : Rs. 60 ( Rs. 65/- by cheque ) \$ 35.00

Students and : Rs. 20 ( Rs. 25/- by cheque in India only )

Retired Teachers

Single copy Rs. 15/- \$ 5.00



---

## INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

---

P. R. BHAT	: Rigidity and Necessity in Kripke	...1
JERRY I. JACOBSON	: Has God's Mystery Been Revealed to Modern Science?	.. 35
ARATI BARUA	: Schopenhauer on Will : A Critique	.. 43
JOSEPH WAYNE SMITH	: Young on the Coherence of Anti-Realist Relativism	...61
CHUKWUDUM BARNABAS OKOLO	: The African Person : A Cultural Definition	...67
A. KASEM	: Can Berkeley be Called an Imagist ?	...75
AJAI R. and SHAKUNTALA A. SINGH	: Psychiatric Ethics : Role of Philosophical Enquiry	...89
	BOOK REVIEW	...119

10 Nov



Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri  
**INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY**  
**FORMAT AND STYLE REQUIREMENTS**

- ★ Papers previously not published elsewhere can be considered for I. P. Q. **Two clear copies of the MS should be submitted.** An additional copy should be retained by the author.
- ★ The first page of the MS should contain author's name, article title and folio heading. The author's institutional affiliation should appear at the end of the article.
- ★ **A Brief abstract of paper must accompany each MS.**
- ★ The suggested length of the article is about 10 to 20 typed pages ( double space ), including notes, references, etc., leaving a sufficient margin on all sides
- ★ Footnotes or References should be used sparingly, and typed in double space on a separate sheet. Footnotes and References will be printed at the end of the article.
- ★ Diagrams, figures, etc., can be used provided they are a must. Unusual symbols should be identified in the margin and an alternative or equivalent symbol or sign should be provided if the one required is rare. Care should be taken to distinguish between the letter O and zero, the letter l, and the number one. Kappa and K, mu and u, nu and v, etc and n The use of italics is to be indicated by single underlining; bold face by wavy underlining.
- ★ The words and/or citations from Sanskrit or any <sup>4</sup>language other than English should be in Roman Script, fully italicized and with accurate standard diacritical marks.
- ★ Generally the Editors are able to reach a decision about the publication within three months, which is communicated to the author subsequently. Authors are requested to avoid needless correspondence.
- ★ The author will receive 25 off-prints free of charge.

Indian Philosophical Quarterly welcomes papers in all areas of Philosophy, History of Philosophy and Philosophy of Indian Origin. It is interested in persistent, resolute inquiries into basic questions regardless of writer's affiliations

Edited and Published by S. S. Barlingay, Department of Philosophy.

University of Poona, Pune 411 007  
CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar  
Printed at Print Art Enterprises, Pune 411 006



---

**INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY**

---

F. A. SHAMSI	:	Whitehead's Method of Extensive Abstraction	...125
A. KANTHAMANI	:	Richard Rorty's Metaphilosophical Argument	...163
SAJAHAN MIAH	:	Russell's Non-phenomenalist Reduction of Physical Object	...177
S. SAMBASIVAM	:	Affirmative Action and Reverse Discrimination	...197
V. C. THOMAS	:	Death and the Meaning of Human Existence	...213
		DISCUSSION	...225
		BOOK REVIEW	...237

---



INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY  
FORMAT AND STYLE REQUIREMENTS

- \* Papers previously not published elsewhere can be considered for I. P. Q. **Two clear copies of the MS should be submitted.** An additional copy should be retained by the author.
- \* The first page of the MS should contain author's name, article title and folio heading. The author's institutional affiliation should appear at the end of the article.
- \* **A Brief abstract of paper must accompany each MS.**
- \* The suggested length of the article is about 10 to 20 typed pages ( double space ), including notes, references, etc., leaving a sufficient margin on all sides.
- \* Footnotes or References should be used sparingly, and typed in double space on a separate sheet. Footnotes and References will be printed at the end of the article.
- \* Diagrams, figures, etc., can be used provided they are a must. Unusual symbols should be identified in the margin and an alternative or equivalent symbol or sign should be provided if the one required is rare. Care should be taken to distinguish between the letter O and zero, the letter l, and the number one, Kappa and K, mu and u, nu and v, eta and n. The use of italics is to be indicated by single underlining bold face by wavy underlining.
- \* The words and/or citations from Sanskrit or any language other than English should be in Roman Script, fully italicized and with accurate standard diacritical marks.
- \* Generally the Editors are able to reach a decision about the publication within three months, which is communicated to the author subsequently. Authors are requested to avoid needless correspondence.
- \* The author will receive 25 off-prints free of charge.

Indian Philosophical Quarterly welcomes papers in all areas of Philosophy, History of Philosophy and Philosophy of Indian Origin. It is interested in persistent, resolute inquiries into basic questions regardless of writer's affiliations



---

## INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

---

R. P. PEERENBOOM	: Buddhist Procees Ethics : Dissolving the Dilemmas of Substantialist Metaphysics ...	247
S A. SHaida	: Moral Scepticism	...269
MAHASWETA CHAUDHURY	: Identity as Necessity : Nozick's Objection-Kripke Replies	...283
A D. P KALANSURIA	: The Dhamma and the Notion of 'Perception' : A Conceptual Technique Made Explicit	.. 291
JAGAT PAL	: Modern Analysis of Syllogi- stic Logic : A Critical Reflection	...303
MANGALA R. CHINCHORE	: Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge	.. 319
ROSHMI GOSWAMI	: On the "Incompleteness" of a Musical Work	.. 345
	BOOK REVIEWS	. 357

---



INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY  
FORMAT AND STYLE REQUIREMENTS

- ★ Papers previously not published elsewhere can be considered for I. P. Q. **Two clear copies of the MS should be submitted.** An additional copy should be retained by the author.
- ★ The first page of the MS should contain author's name, article title and folio heading. The author's institutional affiliation should appear at the end of the article.
- ★ **A Brief abstract of paper must accompany each MS.**
- ★ The suggested length of the article is about 10 to 20 typed pages ( double space ), including notes, references, etc., leaving a sufficient margin on all sides.
- ★ Footnotes or References should be used sparingly, and typed in double space on a separate sheet. Footnotes and References will be printed at the end of the article.
- ★ Diagrams, figures, etc., can be used provided they are a must. Unusual symbols should be identified in the margin and an alternative or equivalent symbol or sign should be provided if the one required is rare. Care should be taken to distinguish between the letter O and zero, the letter l, and the number one, Kappa and K, mu and u, nu and v, eta and n. The use of italics is to be indicated by single underlining bold face by wavy underlining.
- ★ The words and/or citations from Sanskrit or any language other than English should be in Roman Script, fully italicized and with accurate standard diacritical marks.
- ★ Generally the Editors are able to reach a decision about the publication within three months. which is communicated to the author subsequently. Authors are requested to avoid needless correspondence.
- ★ The author will receive 25 off-prints free of charge.

Indian Philosophical Quarterly welcomes papers in all areas of Philosophy, History of Philosophy and Philosophy of Indian Origin. It is interested in persistent, resolute inquiries into basic questions regardless of writer's affiliations



---

INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

---

MADUABU DUKOR	: African Cosmology and Ontology	...367
TORA BASU	: Kant's Conception of Rational Action	...393
BIJOY H. BORUAH	: Fictional Emotion, Quasi- Desire and Background Belief	...409
KOYELI GHOSH-DASTIDAR	: The Morality of Animals	...419
WILLIAM H. MCGOWAN	: Berkeley Kicking his own Stones	...433
DEBABRATA MUKHOPADHYAY	: On Gettier's Notion of Knowledge and Justification	...447
CASSIAN R. AGERA	: Cut the Syllogism to its Size ! Some Reflections on Indian Syllogism	...465
	: DISCUSSION	.. 479
	: BOOK REVIEWS	.. 492

---



Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation, Chennai and the Gangaotri

## INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

### FORMAT AND STYLE REQUIREMENTS

- ★ Papers previously not published elsewhere can be considered for I. P. Q. **Two clear copies of the MS should be submitted.** An additional copy should be retained by the author.
- ★ The first page of the MS should contain author's name, article title and folio heading. The author's institutional affiliation should appear at the end of the article.
- ★ **A Brief abstract of paper must accompany each MS.**
- ★ The suggested length of the article is about 10 to 20 typed pages ( double space ), including notes, references, etc., leaving a sufficient margin on all sides.
- ★ Footnotes or References should be used sparingly, and typed in double space on a separate sheet. Footnotes and References will be printed at the end of the article.
- ★ Diagrams, figures, etc., can be used provided they are a must. Unusual symbols should be identified in the margin and an alternative or equivalent symbol or sign should be provided if the one required is rare. Care should be taken to distinguish between the letter O and zero, the letter l, and the number one, Kappa and K, mu and u, nu and v, eta and n. The use of italics is to be indicated by single underlining bold face by wavy underlining.
- ★ The words and/or citations from Sanskrit or any language other than English should be in Roman Script, fully italicized and with accurate standard diacritical marks.
- ★ Generally the Editors are able to reach a decision about the publication within three months, which is communicated to the author subsequently. Authors are requested to avoid needless correspondence.
- ★ The author will receive 25 off-prints free of charge.

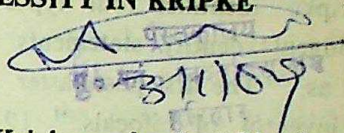
---

Indian Philosophical Quarterly welcomes papers in all areas of Philosophy, History of Philosophy and Philosophy of Indian Origin. It is interested in persistent, resolute inquiries into basic questions regardless of writer's affiliations

---



## RIGIDITY AND NECESSITY IN KRIPKE



The most striking claim that Kripke makes in "Identity and Necessity" and *Naming and Necessity* is: an identity statement between two rigid designators, when true at all, is necessarily true, even though one may not know it *a priori*.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the following implications of the claim are significant. (a) Metaphysical truths can be discovered empirically.<sup>2</sup> It was an eye-opener for many working philosophers of Science within the broad framework of Realism and Empiricism. They would now work with more rigour and passion in order to discover the underlying structure of reality. (b) Rightly, this has fascinated many modal logicians. If the claim is correct, they could now derive ' $\Box p$ ' from ' $p \rightarrow \Box p$ ' where ' $p$ ' is true.<sup>3</sup>

The claim mentioned above is the outcome of Kripke's unique but less familiar notion of a *rigid designator*. In brief, what he understands by a rigid designator is a term that designates the same object in all possible worlds.<sup>4</sup> This does not imply "that the object referred to necessarily exists," but "in any possible world where the object in question *does* exist, in any situation where the object *would* exist, we use the designator in question to designate that object."<sup>5</sup> We can, Kripke contends, replace 'counterfactual situation' or 'possible state of the world' or 'possible history of the world' for 'possible world' in understanding the notion of a rigid designator if that would be less misleading.<sup>6</sup> Natural kind terms such as "water", "gold", certain terms belonging to the realm of experience such as

Received : 12-6-87



\* pain," certain terms in Science such as "heat," " $H_2O$ " and proper names are clear cases of rigid designators for Kripke.

Kripke identifies four types of identity statements. (1) Contingent identity statements involving definite descriptions, such as, "The first postmaster general of the United States is the inventor of bifocals." (2) Identity statements between names, for example, "Tully is Cicero." (3) The type of identity statements which come from Scientific theory, such as, "Heat is the motion of molecules." And finally, (4) Statements involved in formulating what is known as 'identity thesis.' An example of this kind is: "Pain is just a central material state of the brain or of the body." Of these, the last three are of relevance to Kripke's thesis. They are *necessary*, if they are true. The form of the arguments in favour of his said thesis is the same in all the three cases of proper names, statements of theoretical identification in Science and statements pertaining to inner experiences. He summarizes his general argument in the following manner :

Let ' $R_1$ ' and ' $R_2$ ' be the two rigid designators which flank the identity sign. Then ' $R_1 = R_2$ ' is necessary if true. The references of ' $R_1$ ' and ' $R_2$ ', respectively, may well be fixed by nonrigid designators ' $D_1$ ' and ' $D_2$ ', in the Hesperus and Phosphorus cases these have the form 'the heavenly body in such-and-such position in the sky in the evening (morning).' Then although ' $R_1 = R_2$ ' is necessary, ' $D_1 = D_2$ ' may well be contingent, and this is often what leads to the erroneous view that ' $R_1 = R_2$ ' might have turned out otherwise.<sup>8</sup>

For simplicity and convenience, we shall discuss identity statements between names and theoretical identity statements in Science in detail. If the main arguments in this paper succeed, Kripke's general thesis about rigid designators cannot be true in



the case of proper names and theoretical identity statements in Science. However, still his thesis may be true in the case of inner experiences, as in those cases there would be no need of a criterion to fix the reference according to Kripke.

The general plan of the paper is the following. In *Section I*, we explicitly state three conditions that one has to meet prior to making use of Kripke's concept of a rigid designator. After examination of these three conditions, we find that these conditions are too wide. We show how even a Cluster theorist can deduce the so-called metaphysical statements by following Kripke. We are forced to conclude that an obvious contingent identity statement is necessary if we accept Kripke's conditions. *Section II* is devoted to Kripke's notion of a 'counterfactual situation.' After extensive discussion on the issue, we conclude that the notion should be taken to be an epistemic device engineered to sharpen our epistemology. Secondly, we find that in Kripke's formulation of rigid designators, the relationship between language and reality assumes undue importance. We feel the need to project the relationship in a more flexible manner. Our *Section III* deals with Kripke's notion of metaphysical necessity as opposed to the traditional notion of necessity. We conclude that even if we accept Kripke's thesis, it is futile as it fails to answer a sceptic. Secondly, we show how in exceptional cases Kripke has to treat the words "true" and "necessary" as synonymous and lose all the advantages of invoking the notion of a rigid designator. Kripke's notion of a rigid designator is re-defined in what we think to be a more acceptable form in *Section IV*. It turns out to be a notion which belongs exclusively to a theory of language. When viewed from this perspective, certain important issues emerge, and they are discussed in brief in the remaining pages.



## I

To begin with, let us see how vulnerable Kripke's position is. If Kripke is right, given a contingent identity statement, even a child can produce a metaphysical statement. All that the child has to do, is to name things. "The man who invented bifocals was the first postmaster general of the United States" is a contingent identity statement for Kripke as in a counterfactual situation or in a possible world the one who invented bifocals could be a different person than the first postmaster general of the United States. Any one of the phrases taken individually, namely, "the inventor of bifocals" or "the first postmaster general of the United States" can serve as a criterion to fix the designator of a name.<sup>9</sup> Let 'Benjamin' be the name of the person who invented bifocals, and let 'Franklin' be the name of the first postmaster general of the United States. If we do not insist on treating the names as synonymous with their criteria, which of course one can easily grant (as child is yet not an obsessed philosopher), one can have the metaphysical statement "Benjamin is Franklin". 'Benjamin' being a name of a person, and names being rigid designators, the word would designate the person in all possible worlds or counterfactual situations wherever he exists, and the same being true of the name 'Franklin', and given the fact that they are names of one person in our world, there would be no possible world or counterfactual situation where Benjamin would exist, but Franklin would not. And hence the identity statement between the two names would be true in every possible world or counterfactual situation where the referent exists given the fact that in our world these two are the names of the same person and the identity statement between these two is true.

What are the conditions that should be met prior to our deducing the metaphysical statement "Benjamin is Franklin"



from a contingent identity statement? The first condition seems to be that the contingent identity statement should involve definite description which help us to fix the referents of names effectively. Naming is possible in a genuine way only if there is a criterion to fix the reference of a name. Ordinarily, we take any contingent property of the object that distinguishes the object from the rest of the things around as a criterion. We cannot talk of any property other than the definite description in the identity statement for fixing the referent of a name, as that involves knowledge of the referent independent of the criterion for the purpose of naming. That would be a situation where we have not deduced the metaphysical statement from contingent identity statement alone. The second condition seems to be that we should be willing to treat a criterion as a contingent property of the object, and should not treat the names and their criteria as synonyms. If we fail to meet this condition, the proper names would be nothing but disguised descriptions. This would lead us to the situation where we shall have to maintain that the criterion is an essential part of the meaning of the name. By making the criterion as essential property of the object, we land in an absurd position of claiming that Aristotle would not have been Aristotle if he were not the teacher of Alexander. This second condition must be met by us in naming any object, as names are rigid designators, and names would not be rigid designators if we fail to meet this condition while naming.

The second condition, if adhered to, seems to produce miraculous results for Kripke. For example, consider the identity statement "Light is a stream of photons." Originally, we identified light by the characteristic internal visual impressions it can produce in us, that make us able to see. This served us as a criterion to fix the referent of the word 'light'. And now if we treat the criterion as contingent property of light and do not



treat it as part of the meaning of the term 'light', we can claim that the truth value of the identity statement remains unaltered even in the following situation.

Perhaps we can imagine that, by some miracle, sound waves somehow enabled some creature to see. I mean, they gave him visual impressions just as we have, may be exactly the same color sense. We can also imagine the same creature to be completely *insensitive* to light (photons). Who knows what subtle undreamt of possibilities there may be? Would we say that in such a possible world, it was sound which was light, that these wave motions in the air were light? It seems to me that, given our concept of light, we should describe the situation differently.<sup>10</sup>

If the criterion is taken to be synonymous with 'light', then the identity statement "Light is a stream of photons" is false as in this counterfactual situation it is the wave motions in the air that made us able to see.

If we are open-minded like Kripke, we would not say that the counterfactual situation has falsified our claim that light is a stream of photons, but we would describe the situation as "a situation in which certain creatures, maybe even those who were called 'people' and inhabited this planet, were sensitive not to light but to sound waves, sensitive to them in exactly the same way that we are sensitive to light." This is so because "once we have found out what light is, when we talk about other possible world we are talking about *this* phenomenon in the world, and not using 'light' as a phrase *synonymous* with 'whatever gives us the visual impression—whatever helps us to see.'"

This brings us to the third crucial condition which has to be fulfilled before deducing a metaphysical conclusion from a con-



tingent identity statement. We should use words in our language with "*our* meanings and *our* references" while talking about counterfactual situations.<sup>11</sup> We cannot use a word as a homonym<sup>12</sup> and claim it to be a rigid designator. If we insist in the above counterfactual situation that it is sound which is light as people in that counterfactual situation could see by perceiving sound waves exactly the way we perceive colours, then we are using the word 'light' as a homonym. 'By 'light' on the one hand we mean 'stream of photons' in our world, on the other, 'sound wave' in the counterfactual situation. Thus, the counterfactual situation described above does not falsify the identity statement "Light is a stream of photons" if we carefully distinguish the two *senses* of the word 'light' here. We have failed to keep the meaning and referent of the word 'light' in tact in describing the counterfactual situation.

Of course, we can meet all these three conditions in order to deduce a metaphysical statement from a contingent identity statement without much difficulty. The second and the third conditions are relatively simple to meet; they are matters pertaining to our attitudes<sup>13</sup> and language. We can easily grant that the criteria which are used for fixing the references of words are contingent properties of objects, and without much difficulty we can describe counterfactual situations in our language<sup>14</sup> with our meanings and our references. It may not always be possible to meet the first condition, namely the contingent identity statement should involve a definite description which would help us in naming. However, all those contingent identity statements between two definite descriptions would meet this condition, and at least in those cases we can deduce one metaphysical statement for every contingent identity statement.

Excited by the idea of deducing metaphysical statements from contingent identity statements, we can be brave now, and deduce



more significant metaphysical statements. Consider the statement "The first postmaster general of the United States is Franklin". Can't this be proven to be necessary if it is true? I think, we can. We should follow Kripke's guidelines strictly, and meet all the conditions stated above, especially the third one. We need a criterion to fix the reference of the phrase "the first postmaster general of the United States". Of course, the definite description "the inventor of bifocals" can serve our purpose of a criterion to fix the reference of this phrase. We should treat the property of being the inventor of bifocals as a contingent property of the referent of "the first postmaster general of the United States". That we can grant easily by claiming that in a possible world the first postmaster general need not be the inventor of bifocals. So far we have taken care of the first two conditions of Kripke. Now we should show that in every counterfactual situation the statement "The first postmaster general of the United States is Franklin" is true if the statement is true in our world. This we do by insisting that every one should speak in English with the same meanings and reference of the phrase "the first postmaster general of the United States" and the name "Franklin". Ask the question, could it be the case that someone else other than Franklin is the first postmaster general of the United States in a counterfactual situation? If any one thinks that in a counterfactual situation Franklin lacked the quality of being the first postmaster general of the United States, we should point out to him that in that counterfactual situation, he has used the phrase "the first postmaster general of the United States" with two references, in our world it was Franklin who was the referent of the phrase, and in the counterfactual situation it is altogether someone else, or no one. Thus, we can point out to him that has not fully met Kripke's third condition. Given the fact that it is Franklin who was the



first postmaster general of the United States, we cannot stipulate a *single* counterfactual situation where the first postmaster general of the United States would not be Franklin if we are to use the phrase and the name with *our* meanings and *our* references. In every counterfactual situation or possible world where the referent of the phrase "the first postmaster general of the United States" exists at all, it would be Franklin. Suppose, one maintains that in a counterfactual situation Franklin exists but there is no postal service. This would be a genuine counterfactual situation, where the identity statement "The first postmaster general of the United States is Franklin" would be false. But, following the Cluster theory of meaning<sup>15</sup>, we can say that the meaning of the term 'Franklin' has not remained unchanged. According to the Cluster theory, the important attribute of Franklin is that he was the first postmaster general of United States, and an important attribute of a person is part of the name of that person. Thus, if we admit that the above counterfactual situation is a genuine one, we have changed the meaning<sup>16</sup> of the name 'Franklin' in counterfactual situation and we have changed the referent of the phrase "the first postmaster general of the United States". Having explained away the counterfactual situation as not genuine one, we can safely conclude that the identity proposition in question is necessary. Having shown this we can undertake to prove that the statement "The inventor of bifocals is Benjamin" is necessary by modifying our argument suitably. We can deduce now from the three necessary statements, namely, "Benjamin is Franklin" "The first postmaster general of the United States is Franklin" and "The inventor of bifocals is Benjamin", the statement "The first postmaster general of the United States is the inventor of bifocals" and this statement is necessary as it is deduced exclusively from necessary statements.



We began with the supposition that the statement "The man who invented bifocals is the first postmaster general of the United States" is contingent, but we ended making the claim to the contrary. Of course, Kripke would never agree that it is a necessary statement. He would, perhaps, find fault with us on one count. He would maintain that a definite description can never be a rigid designator. A definite description is a description after all, and it describes a quality of an object; while a name is not a description; it does not refer to a quality, but refers to a substance. We can answer this objection in the following manner. A definite description makes use of a quality of an object in order to refer to that object uniquely, while, we do not need to use a quality of an object in order to refer to an object in the case of names. This difference between a definite description and a name is in their *mode of reference* in the Fregean terminology. The choice of a mode of reference is ours, and hence this should not have much to do with metaphysics. Kripke has maintained that the name 'Hitler' would refer to Hitler even in a counterfactual situation where Hitler had never been born.<sup>17</sup> In a counterfactual situation if a name can refer to an object which does not exist, surely a definite description could refer to an object in a counterfactual situation where the object exists but the quality which is used in the mode of reference is absent in the object. Our linguistic preference to use a particular mode of reference, namely, that of description or of names should not make any difference to the metaphysical truths.

Kripke seems to be obsessed by the metaphysical idea that everything is what it is. The third condition that we have discussed above in the context of deriving a metaphysical statement from a contingent one, is the outcome of this obsession. He wants to retain the meaning, and referent of a word in its original form even in a counterfactual situation. He writes :



If names are rigid designators, then there can be no question about identities being necessary, because 'a' and 'b' will be rigid designators of a certain man or thing *x*. Then even in every possible world, *a* and *b* will both refer to this same object *x*, and to no other, and so there will be no situation in which *a* might not have been *b*. That would have to be a situation in which the object which we are also now calling '*x*' would not have been identical with itself. Then one could not possibly have a situation in which Cicero would not have been Tully or Hesperus would not have been phosphorus.<sup>18</sup>

It is very obvious in the passage above why Kripke thinks that Cicero has to be Tully even in a counterfactual situation. If Cicero is not Tully in a counterfactual situation, it is a violation of the law of identity for Kripke, given the fact that Cicero is Tully in our world. It is this obsession that has led him to conclude that the following is not a relevant counterfactual situation which, to our mind, obviously is :

For example, it could have been the case that Venus did indeed rise in the morning in exactly the position in which we saw it, but that on the other hand, in the position which is in fact occupied by Venus in the evening, Venus was not there, and Mars took its place. This is all counterfactual because in fact Venus is there. Now one can also imagine that in this counterfactual other possible world, the earth would have been inhabited by people and that they should have used the names 'Phosphorus' for Venus in the morning and 'Hesperus' for Mars in the evening. Now this is all very good, but would it be a situation in which Hesperus was not Phosphorus?<sup>19</sup>

Of course, Kripke's favourite answer to this question is that it is not.



It would have been less objectionable if he had only one obsession. Along with this obsession about the law of identity, he also has an obsession about language. Note what he writes further in discussing the example above :

Of course, it is a situation in which people would have been able to *say*, truly, "Hesperus is not Phosphorus;" but we are supposed to describe things in our language not in theirs. So let us describe it in our language. ... We might say that under such circumstances, we would not have called Hesperus 'Hesperus' because Hesperus would have been in a different position. But that still would not make Phosphorus different from Hesperus; ... <sup>20</sup>

A language spoken in a counterfactual situation by those people who exist in that counterfactual situation is not the language we speak according to Kripke. The people in the counterfactual situation, even if they seem to speak English, do not speak English, but a language which phonetically overlaps with English, as they do not use the words with our meanings and our references. <sup>21</sup>

It is difficult to understand Kripke's notion of rigidity without giving special attention to the way we talk about counterfactual situations. It is important to note that the relationship between language and reality has to remain in tact while the talk about counterfactual situation goes on. Note the importance of language in describing a counterfactual situation in the following passage :

...when we speak of a counterfactual situation, we speak of it in English, even if it is part of the description of that counterfactual situation that we were all speaking German in that counterfactual situation. We say, 'suppose we had all been speaking German' or 'suppose we had been using English in a nonstandard way.' Then we are describing a



possible world or counterfactual situation in which people, including ourselves, did speak in a certain way different from the way we speak. But still, in describing that world, we use *English* with *our* meanings and *our* references. It is in this sense that I speak of rigid designator as having the same reference in all possible worlds. <sup>22</sup>

If we have understood Kripke fully, we should not say that "Tully is Cicero" is false in a possible world where people, who speak a language which phonetically overlapped with English, maintain rightly that in their world "Tully" and "Cicero" referred to two different people. In a possible world, we, as part of the possible world speaking English with different designators associated with these two words "Tully" and "Cicero," would not be uttering a true statement in English; even if, in that possible world according to us, we have uttered a true statement "Tully is not Cicero" in English, this statement is not in fact a true statement.

Perhaps, a clarificatory note in favour of Kripke should be added here. It is possible to argue that although Aristotle would be Aristotle in all counterfactual situations or possible worlds even if he lacks his most important attributes in these counterfactual situation or possible worlds. However, this would not be true of languages. 'English' for example, is considered as a name of a language, but this is not a name of substance. Hence 'English' cannot behave like a proper name of a substance. All names of persons and places, or that of natural substances are rigid designators, but a language does not fall in this category.

If we treat 'English' as a rigid designator, then we would be saying that it is English that the people speak in a counterfactual situation even if that language lacks the most important



properties of the English language. We would be forced to maintain that in the counterfactual situation where people refer to Mars by the word 'Hesperus' and to Venus by the word 'Phosphorus', they truly claim that "Hesperus is not Phosphorus." But I think that we cannot save Kripke's thesis in this fashion. If we are to speak on the analogy of objects, we can imagine people speaking English in all possible worlds or counterfactual situations. Even if some people in that possible world did not have the word "Aristotle" as he does not exist in that possible world, we maintain that people in that possible world spoke English. Many of us do not know fine shades of meaning of many English words; still we are said to be teaching in English. Moreover, some of us do not know who Einstein is, and some of us think that he is the inventor of atom bombs which he was not, and still we are said to be speaking English.

Accepting Kripke's picture of language leads to certain fundamental difficulties. Consider for example, the fact that long ago scientists had thought that water was an element, but later, they modified their view and considered water as a compound. This involved a change of the meaning of the term "water". They preferred their technical term "Hydroxide" as it is Hydrogen and Oxygen elements that come together to form water. Technically, the term "Hydroxide" has a different meaning, and a different referent. Water is never said to be pure, there is always some element of other organic compounds, minerals dissolved in it. While "Hydroxide" or " $H_2O$ " refers to pure water, and we get no pure water in nature. Thus, speaking in strict terms, we do not refer to the same liquid by the two terms "water" and " $H_2O$ ", and thus following Kripke we should conclude that scientists do not speak English.

A scientific theory which is internally consistent cannot be proven to be false if we follow Kripke's notion of a language.



This is because, one has to provide evidence against a self-consistent system, from outside to prove a part of it or the whole of it to be false. Thus, Newtonian mechanics which is internally consistent could not have been proved to be false if Kripke were correct. Einstein is said to have proved the limitation of Newtonian theory as he could provide a new definition of an 'object'. In his new definition, he added a forth dimension to the Newtonian notion of a three dimensional object. This has enabled him to formulate laws regarding fast moving distant objects. Following Kripke, a Newtonian can still maintain that the situation where Newton's theory is said to have failed is not a genuine one, as the meaning and referent of the word "object" has not remained the same. And any observation made on the basis of Einstein's theory of relativity cannot be counted as 'fact' disproving Newton's theory.

A natural language is a living thing. It changes every day. New words are added, and old ones are modified to suit the need of the people and culture. Kripke's philosophical language would be like a calculus. It would include even the referents or the objects as part of the language. Such a difficult language is ineffective for any meaningful activity.

In the absense of a clear theory of meaning, it is difficult to imagine what Kripke would have counted as a case of change in meaning of a word. However, without waiting for his well-defined theory, it is enough if we point out that for more reasons than one, we could count that the above case of water is a case of change in meaning and referent of the term "water". If he insists on maintaining that water has remained water in spite of our change in perspective, and therefore as a name the term "water" continues to refer to water and means water whenever we use the word, by any stretch of imagination we cannot understand his notion of 'meaning' and 'referent'.



## II

We need to examine Kripke's notion of a 'counterfactual situation' or a 'possible world' if we are to understand his notion of a rigid designator. Ask the question : What would be a counterfactual situation to the fact that Benjamin Franklin is the inventor of bifocals ? The answer is very simple : A situation where Benjamin Franklin is not the inventor of bifocals. But such situation could vary. Broadly, they can be classified into the following categories : (a) No one has yet invented bifocals. Or, (b) No one existed with the name ' Benjamin Franklin ', Or, (c) Someone else invented bifocals, say, Ronald. Strictly speaking, situation (a) would not constitute a counterfactual situation for Kripke. The situation where no one has yet invented bifocals would be a situation where we cannot use this property to fix the reference of Benjamin, for that is not an attribute of anyone. Similarly, in situation (b) where no one existed having the name ' Benjamin Franklin ', the name could not be a rigid designator, as it is not a name all. (For our discussion fictional names are not relevant.) Only the situation (c), namely, where someone other than Benjamin Franklin invented bifocals would be a proper counterfactual situation, for it is *in fact* Benjamin Franklin who invented bifocals.

One might think that " the simple fact that two people can have the same name refutes the rigidity thesis ".<sup>23</sup> But this does not pose any serious problem for the rigid designation theory. If we wish, we can have the convention of not naming two objects with the same word. However, in most of the cases it does not lead to any problem of ambiguity of reference; hence we do not bother to name each object differently. We cannot talk of counterfactual situation or possible world by using such cases. ' John ' would be, perhaps, the name of a thousand persons, but we cannot point to a man and utter that the statement



"John is the president of the United States" and hence it is counterfactual to the statement "John was never a president" if Mr. John whom we have in mind here is a different person from John F. Kennedy.

The counterpart theory also does not challenge the rigid designation theory. The question of transworld identification arises only if we accept the Counterpart theory. For the Counterpart theory, the major problem is that of identifying the counterpart of Aristotle in a possible world who most closely resembles Aristotle in his most important properties in the actual world.<sup>24</sup> However, this also does not prove that one can work out a counterfactual situation to Aristotle, as counterparts of Aristotle are not Aristotle himself.

Do we use a rigid designator rigidly in a counterfactual situation or a possible world where the referent does not exist? "If you say 'suppose Hitler had never been born' then 'Hitler' refers here, still rigidly, to something that would not exist in the counterfactual situation described."<sup>25</sup> If 'Hitler' does not refer to Hitler rigidly, by looking at a counterpart of Hitler, we might have concluded that Hitler exists in such a counterfactual situation. We are able to say that Hitler does not exist in this counterfactual situation because we use the name 'Hitler' rigidly.

It is worth noting that Kripke maintains that in practice we cannot describe a complete counterfactual course of events and have no need to do so. A practical description of the extent to which the 'counterfactual situation' differs in the relevant way from the actual facts is sufficient; the 'counterfactual situation' could be thought of as a miniworld or a ministate, restricted to features of the world relevant to the problem at hand. This in-

...2



volves less idealization both as to considering entire world histories and as to considering *all* possibilities.<sup>96</sup>

'Possible worlds' are *stipulated*, not *discovered* by powerful telescopes.<sup>97</sup> Generally, things are not 'found out' about a counterfactual situation, they are stipulated. The problem of identifying a table in a possible world does not arise, as such a possible world does not exist. "Don't ask: how can I identify this table in another possible world, except by its properties? I have the table in my hands, I can point to it, and when I ask whether *it* might have been in another room, I am talking, by definition about *it*. I don't have to identify it after seeing through a telescope. If I am talking about it, I am talking about *it*, in the same way as when I say that our hands might have been painted green, I have stipulated that I am talking about greenness."<sup>98</sup>

Metaphysically speaking we cannot talk of possible world or counterfactual situations. Metaphysical statements cannot be probable, nor can they be conditional. They are necessarily true and there is no 'possible world' in metaphysics. What exists is actual, and only actual exists. If anything that does not exist but, we humans think that it exists, then we are mistaken; and if something that exists but appears to be different, then we humans are not able to know the reality as it is, but know the reality as it appears. Thus, the counterfactual situations or the possible worlds are human constructs; rightly they are said to be 'stipulations'. We use this 'possible world' argument to know the metaphysical truths; this has to be language-independent, at least in the sense in which logic is language-independent. A counterfactual situation should be worked out to know whether we have any epistemic bias in claiming a statement to be true. This epistemic bias, of course, would include even the cultural and linguistic aspects. Any statement that turns out to be false



in a counterfactual situation where such an epistemic bias does not exist, has to be counted as a contingent truth.

Our ability to work out counterfactual situation is in a sense directly proportional to our knowledge of the attributes of an object. If we know many attributes of an object, we can construct many counterfactual situations varying the attributes of the object. However, at no stage a human being would know all the properties of even one object. That is to say, he cannot stipulate all the counterfactual situations to come to the conclusion as to whether an identity statement between names would be true in all those counterfactual situations given the fact that the statement is true in the actual world. This forces us to talk of *relevant* counterfactual situations. However, this is a hard decision to make, especially in the case of theoretical identifications. For example, "light" is defined in different manners depending on the theory one holds. Even a counterfactual situation like the one Kripke describes where one has vision due to sound waves might be a relevant counterfactual situation. If we are so sure of the nature of light, that it is a stream of photons, there is no need to work out a counterfactual situation. If we know for sure that the nature of reality is such that light is a stream of photons, we cannot work out a counterfactual situation falsifying it, as it would be a metaphysical truth. However, one who does not know for sure it is a metaphysical truth would tend to construct counterfactual situations to establish the necessity of the statement. We know that the first postmaster general of the United States is Benjamin Franklin, but still we talk of this property of him in a counterfactual situation in order to know whether the statement "The first postmaster general United States is Benjamin Franklin" is necessary, as there is an epistemic possibility that we have wrongly taken Benjamin Franklin to be the first postmaster general of the Uni-



ted States. Therefore it is apt to treat 'counterfactual situations', and 'possible worlds' as epistemic devices to achieve metaphysical truths

Having said that a 'possible world' has to be always taken in an epistemic sense, and there is no metaphysical sense of 'possible' involved here, we need to re-examine some of Kripke's arguments. It seems to be possible to refute Kripke's claim that identity statements are necessary if they are true by de-linking language from reality. It seems obvious that we could state metaphysical truths in any language. Language cannot be a hindrance to our philosophical activity of stating metaphysical truths. This being so, we need to carefully examine all the counterfactual situations where Kripke has insisted that we should describe the counterfactual situation only in our language with our meanings and our references. Consider the example of a counterfactual situation where Venus and Mars are named as 'Phosphorus' and 'Hesperus' respectively by the people who lived in that counterfactual situation. In this counterfactual situation, people truly said "Hesperus is not Phosphorus". This is a genuine counterfactual situation if we de-link language and reality in the following manner. We first grant that the statement "Hesperus is Phosphorus" can be expressed in any language, English or German or any other language. And the language that we use in a counterfactual situation also is English in the above context. The difference between our English in the actual world and the English in the possible world, lies not in the language, but outside it : words do not refer to the same object in the two worlds. It is *we* who speak English who constructed the counterfactual situation where this identity statement is shown to be false, for a person in the counterfactual situation does not speak any language as he does not 'exist' in the normal sense of the term. This indicates the characteristic use of our words. What object a word should refer to is determined by us. And



following rigid designation theory if we decide to use a word in a certain fashion, that certainly would bring some change in our way of using words as it is a prescription and not a description. The advantages that we would have by resolving to use one word for one referent even in a counterfactual situation would be linguistic. And we took advantage of this in our first section in deducing the so-called metaphysical statements from contingent ones.

### III

It is important to distinguish what Kripke calls 'an epistemic' sense of necessity from 'metaphysical' sense of necessity. Sometimes, 'necessity' is used in an epistemological way. For example, all *a priori* statements are necessary in this sense. But Kripke is not interested in such statements. We ask sometimes whether something might have been true. If something is false, obviously it is not necessarily true. If a statement is true, one should ask the question: might it have been otherwise? If the answer is 'no,' then this fact about the world is a necessary one.<sup>29</sup>

There are situations where we are unsure of the truth value of a statement. In such situations we say 'it might turn out either way.' For example, the four colour theorem might turn out to be true or false. "Obviously, the 'might' here is purely 'epistemic' — it merely expresses our present state of ignorance or uncertainty."<sup>30</sup>

If the identity statement "Hesperus is Phosphorus" is claimed to be true, it is on the basis of some epistemic evidence that the statement is claimed to be true. However, in a counterfactual situation, one might be in a qualitatively identical epistemic situation. On the basis of qualitatively identical epistemic evidence, one might conclude in that counterfactual situation that



the identity statement "Hesperus is Phosphorus" is false as they do not have the same referent. Of course, even this does not prove the identity statement to be false in the counterfactual situation for Kripke. At least one of those stars or heavenly bodies in the counterfactual situation should not be Venus; otherwise the identity statement could not have found to be true in our actual world.<sup>31</sup>

The question is not : if something is true, whether it would be simultaneously false ? In fact, when we stipulate a counterfactual situation, we suspend our knowledge of the truth value of the statement. When I ask the question "Could Aristotle not be a philosopher in a possible world or a counterfactual situation ?" I suspend my knowledge about Aristotle that he is a philosopher. This is essential to the talk of counterfactual situations and possible worlds, otherwise, we have to answer like a fatalist or a determinist responding to the question of human freedom : given the causes, he could not have acted differently. Similarly, when we have to work out a counterfactual situation for an identity statement between names, we have to suspend our knowledge of the truth value of the identity statement and answer the question "Could morning star be different from evening star in all possible worlds ?" And if the answer is in the positive, it is not a metaphysical statement, and if the answer is in the negative it is.

A metaphysical statement is necessary only if it is true in all possible worlds or counterfactual situations. Suppose that "the first postmaster general of the United States is the inventor of bifocals" is a metaphysical statement. To claim this is to claim that this statement is true from all perspectives. To justify our claim we adopt the mode of counterfactual arguments or we adopt possible world perspective. Even if we know the truth of a contingent statement, we are not sure whether we are influenced



by a perspective in claiming the truth of the statement. Similarly, unknowingly we could have made a judgement which is erroneous as in the case of optical illusions. Unconsciously we could hate or love some persons or places and that could lead us to make wrong judgements. Given these epistemic limitations of a man, in order to sharpen his epistemic ability to know reality correctly, philosophers have adopted the possible world perspective or that of a counterfactual situation. Quite correctly, Kripke has pointed out that counterfactual situations are stipulated and imagined. Possible worlds do not exist any where and counterfactual situations are not factual situations.

All of us including a skeptic can in principle agree that an identity statement between two rigid designators is necessary if it is true, partly because it is a harmless thesis, and partly because one could never prove any statement to be necessary. In order to prove that an identity statement between two rigid designators is necessary one should prove beyond doubt that it is true in our world. For example, "Light is a stream of photons" is an identity statement and is taken to be true, by some scientists, while others totally disagree with the view. Kripke has to show first that it is true beyond any doubt in our world. And of course, if he can prove that to us, without even counterfactual arguments or arguments from the point of view of possible worlds, we, including all sceptics, would grant the statement the status of a metaphysical truth.

Kripke's thesis is futile for another reason as well. He does not claim that a rigid designator, designates the object in all possible worlds, but in all possible worlds where the object exists. That is to say that a referent of a rigid designator is not a necessary existent. 'Necessity' that he talks of is not the traditional metaphysical notion of necessity. In a traditional sense, a statement, if it is true, is true in all possible worlds and



is false in no possible world. This is not the situation which Kripke is visualizing. He is talking of the truth value of identity statements only in those possible worlds where the designator exists. If the referent does not exist in a possible world, he is unsure of the status of the truth value of such a statement in that possible world. Sometimes he is tempted to go along with Russell and claim that the statement is false. But this temptation is curbed by the fear that then that would go against his rigid designation theory. He then takes the line of Strawson of claiming that the identity statement "Morning star is Evening star" is neither true nor false in a possible world where Venus does not exist. Of course, this would commit Kripke to an absurd position of claiming that his metaphysical statements are true subject to the existence of relevant objects as real.

Kripke can be shown further to be maintaining a trivial thesis. Consider his weak sense of 'necessity.' An identity statement is necessary if it is true in a weaker sense in the following situation. Let us say that Venus exists only in some possible worlds and does not exist in some other possible worlds. Then the identity statement "Hesperus is Phosphorus" is necessary in a weaker sense. But, what would happen if Venus does not exist in any possible world, but only in the actual world? Remember, possible worlds are not 'out there.' Counterfactual situations are stipulated, not factual. Even in such a situation, we need to claim that the identity statement is necessary as it fulfils all the conditions Kripke mentions. The names used in the sentence are rigid designators and in all possible worlds where the objects exist, the statement is true. If the objects do not exist in any possible world, the condition that 'the identity statement must be true in all possible worlds where the designator exists' goes, and we can safely conclude that the identity statement is necessary in the weaker sense. At least in those cases where the



designator exists only in the actual world and in no possible world, Kripke's claim has the form "an identity statement is necessary because it is true." And thus "true" and "necessary" become synonymous, and this amounts to claiming that a statement is true if it is true.

#### IV

To sum up our discussion so far : (1) Kripke's insistence that we should view counterfactual situations always from our world view in our language with our meanings and references is objectionable. The importance of a counterfactual argument is lost, if we accept what Kripke says. We need to emphasize the fact that we suspend the truth value of a statement while talking about it in a counterfactual situation. If we do not keep this in mind, we shall be unnecessarily doing the exercise of constructing counterfactual situations only to reject them as not relevant ones. (2) We can certainly construct genuine counterfactual situations to most identity statements between rigid designators which are true. "The first postmaster general of the United States" is a contingent statements, so is "Tully is Cicero," even if they are true. This is possible, because, in the same counterfactual situation Tully could lack the property of being an orator, while Cicero might possess this very property. (3) Kripke's notion of metaphysical necessity is a dubious one. This is because, even a metaphysically necessary statement may not have a truth value in a counterfactual situation for Kripke. Where the relevant objects and facts about which the statement in question is made do not exist, in that counterfactual situation the statement lacks the truth value. This takes away all the advantages of counting a statement to be metaphysically necessary as opposed to counting it to be contingent.

Let us now examine whether certain aspects of Kripke's thesis could be maintained as a tenable theory of language. He has



rightly pointed out that a proper name is a rigid designator. We use names as rigid designators, in describing counterfactual situations. Even those worlds that name the substance, which are generally known as natural kind term, are also rigid designators. When we talk of a counterfactual situation, we vary some known properties of the object named, and conceive of it as the same object. Kripke rightly says that "it is *this* very table" that we talk about in a counterfactual situation, when we say that *it* could have been in a different corner of the room. It is also quite correct to claim that we use criteria to *fix* the references, and criteria are contingent properties of the objects referred to. In a counterfactual situation, an object might lack the properties which it has in our world, including the one which we have used as a criterion while naming it.

However, if we try to retain these two aspects of Kripke's rigid designation theory, namely, proper names are rigid designators and criteria are contingent properties of the objects named, rejecting the rest of his thesis, certain problems seem to arise. Let us list some of them now. (1) How is it that "Tully" and "Cicero" are rigid designators, and they are the names of the same person in our world, but name different persons in a possible world? (2) How is it that "Tully is Tully" is not a synthetic and contingent statement, while "Tully is Cicero" is, even if it is true? In other words, why is self-identity not a quality, if identity is! (3) What is the status of Leibniz's law and the law of identity in a counterfactual situation? Would they be valid across the possible worlds? Let us discuss these problems in brief in the remaining part of this essay.

Answer to our problem (1) lies very much in our notion of a rigid designator. We remarked earlier that when we talk about counterfactual situations or about possible worlds, we suspend the truth values of the statements made in the actual world. We



treat the statements afresh in a counterfactual situation. Since, we do not hold the view that some of the properties of Aristotle are essential to him, we could vary his properties in a counterfactual situation. Tully might lack the property of being an orator in a possible world  $w$  while Cicero might be an orator. This is because, being an orator is not an essential property of Tully. We suspend all our knowledge about the attributes of Tully and Cicero in stipulating a counterfactual situation or a possible world, and we did exactly that in describing Tully and Cicero in the possible world  $w$ . If we hold the view that simultaneously, Tully is Cicero and is not Cicero, in the same possible world we are contradicting ourselves. But we have not done anything of that sort, in describing Tully and Cicero in the possible world  $w$ . Without contradicting ourselves we could maintain that "Tully" and "Cicero" have been used as rigid designators, even in describing them the way we did in the possible world  $w$ . That is possible because, "Tully" referred to Tully in the possible world  $w$ , and to no one else; and "Cicero" referred to Cicero and to no one else in the possible world  $w$ . We are not bound by the principle that if we vary an attribute in the case of the referent of the name "Tully", we should vary the same attribute in the case of the referent of "Cicero" in a counterfactual situation. If we put such a limitation on ourselves while stipulating a counterfactual situation, we commit ourselves to a form of Aristotelian essentialism; and the essence of Tully and Cicero being the same as it is the same person called by these two names, we would not be able to imagine them of having different attributes in the same counterfactual situation  $w$ . Then the rigid designation theory would not be a theory about words and therefore it would not be about language; it would be a theory about the nature of objects in counterfactual situations.



To be more precise, if rigid designation theory is a theory about the attributes of objects in counterfactual situations as opposed to their attributes in our world, then we would have to name these objects along with other things, in each counterfactual situation. On such an interpretation, "Tully" is the name of a person in our world, and the same person might lack this name in a counterfactual situation; instead, he might have the name "Aristotle" in that counterfactual situation. Moreover, if the person has two names, say, "Tully" and 'Cicero' in our world, he might have "Aristotle" and "Plato" as his names in a counterfactual situation or might not have any name at all. This view would commit us to the position that we can talk of an identity statement between names only within a particular world view where an object has at least two names. In brief, on this view names become one of the attributes of things named, and in stipulating possible worlds, we shall have to stipulate whether an object has the same name in that possible world or a different one or none. It is possible then that Venus exists in a counterfactual situation, but the identity statement "Hesperus is Phosphorus" would be false, as in that counterfactual situation Venus does not possess the attribute of being called "Hesperus" and "Phosphorus".

Nonetheless, if we take rigid designation theory as a theory about how objects would be in a counterfactual situation, then Quine's objection is pertinent.<sup>32</sup> His demand for a criterion to identify the object in different passible worlds becomes genuine. We should know about whome we are talking in a counterfactual situation: whether it is Tully or someone else who closely resembles him in that counterfactual situation. Thus, if Kripke maintains that rigid designation theory is a theory about objects, then he has to provide a criterion for identifying Tully in different possible worlds in order to talk about Tully in



those possible worlds, which obviously he cannot do. Moreover, it would be misleading to call such a theory as a rigid designation theory, because on such an interpretation, there would be no designator-designated relationship. Thus, it seems to us very reasonable to conclude that rigid designation theory is a theory about how certain words function, or how we use them in counterfactual situations.

Let us now turn to our problem (2). It is claimed that "Everything is what it is", is a substantive metaphysical thesis. If this is so, we can deduce a linguistic thesis from this : every word is what it is. Every word used in an unambiguous manner would have the same meaning and the same referent even if it occurs in different places in a sentence. Thus it follows that "A is A". Given this linguistic *a priori* principle, we need not know what the meaning of a word is and which object the word refers to in order to claim that "A is A" is true. "A is A" is claimed to be expressing self-identity. Frege would take it to be a tautology. On the other hand, it is said that "A is B" is contingent even if it is true. "A is B" is claimed to involve identity. And hence identity is claimed to be a quality as it appears to give some knowledge as is the case of "Morning Star is Evening Star". It was an empirical discovery that Venus is the same planet which is seen in the morning and in the evening. For many philosophers 'self-identity' is not a quality, while, they are unsure whether 'identity' is a quality. Kripke tends to believe that even self-identity is a quality, though a trivial one. Searle is tempted to treat "A is A" as analytic or tautological and "A is B" as synthetic.<sup>33</sup> To begin with, 'A is B' is synthetic, and it becomes analytic subsequently when we know that it is true. But, Kripke would treat identity as a property. He believes that many important discoveries in Science are of this type; for example, light is a stream of photons, heat is due to molecular



agitation, etc. He reduces all identity statements to self-identity statements of the form "A is A" while justifying why identity statements must be necessary, using his thesis of a rigid designator. But, he does not identify self-identity statements with identity statements.<sup>34</sup>

Consider how we use criteria to fix the reference of a name. For example, assume that I am introduced to Prof. Kripke in a seminar. I go back to my institute and talk about the philosophers who participated in the seminar and papers presented. Let us say that Kripke had presented a paper in that seminar on "Rigidity". Now, I can give this as a criterion for fixing the referent of the name "Kripke". But I may not use this; instead I might choose to use the name of another of his articles, viz. "Identity and Necessity" as a criterion to fix the referent of the name "Kripke". But if the hearer fails to identify the person, I may alternatively say that the person is the one who wrote the book *Naming and Necessity*. If even that does not succeed, I might try something else, including the visual criteria such as a photograph, to fix the reference of the name. The message of this story is this: we discover new criteria to re-fix the name in a new situation. Given a certain amount of knowledge about a situation, we have the ability to find new definite descriptions, ostensibly or otherwise, which help our hearer to fix the reference of the name. That is to say, no criterion is essential to any name, Kripke would not accept this view easily as he appears to believe that only at the initial stage we need criteria to fix the reference; later on only the name is passed on from person to person, and this process forms a causal chain.<sup>35</sup> If one who is in the middle of this chain has to fix the reference, he has to trace back this causal chain to reach the first person who baptized the referent.



It is true that we need a non-circular criterion to fix the referent of a name, and the criterion is always a contingent property of the object named; we need two such criteria in those cases where we have two names for the same object. Of course, if we know already one name of the object and want to name it again with another word, we do not need an additional criterion. But in such a situation, the identity statement between these two names would follow analytically. In the case of nick-names, for example, we do not need additional criteria to fix the referent of the nick-name. However, in the following situation where we know two names, and we have independent criteria to fix the references of these names as was the case with 'Morning star' and 'Evening star,' it would not follow that the identity statement between the names is analytic. "Morning star is Evening star" has the form of "A is B." Now, imagine that we are able to see Venus continuously from one evening to the next morning. This gives a common criterion to fix or re-fix the names "Morning star" and "Evening star."

An identity statement between any two designators is true, if we can provide a common criterion to fix or re-fix the references of both the designators simultaneously. That is to say, any criterion, if it fixes an object for the use of a word as a name, would do the same in the case of another word as well. This would be true even in a counterfactual situation. If the two names "Tully" and "Cicero" have a common criterion to fix the references of these names, obviously the criterion would fix one and only one person as the bearer of these names, and the identity statement between the two names would be true in that counterfactual situation.

It is not far from true to maintain that we always discover the truth of an identity statement between names by discovering a common criterion to fix or re-fix the referents of both the



names. Since a criterion is a contingent property of the object named, it provides us synthetic knowledge. We discovered a new criterion, other than the one we used earlier for fixing the references of the names "Hesperus" and "Phosphorus" when we discovered that "Hesperus is Phosphorus" is true. The syntheticity of the statement lies in our discovery of a common criterion for re-fixing the referents of these two names. Moreover, since a criterion is a contingent property of the object named, in the absence of such a common criterion in a counterfactual situation, we cannot maintain that the identity statement would be true even if it is true in our world due to the presence of a common criterion in our world.

Our problem (3) is regarding Leibniz's law, Leibniz's law does not hold across possible worlds in the following situation. Consider the identity statement between names "Tully is Cicero." Now, if this identity statement is true, then all the properties of Tully have to be the properties of Cicero. However, suppose that Cicero is in our world and Tully is in a possible world; Cicero is an orator, while Tully need not be one, even if the identity statement "Tully is Cicero" is true in that possible world. That is to say, Leibniz's law is applicable in our world, or in a possible world, but not across the possible worlds.

Now Leibniz's law can be applied to the names "Tully" and "Cicero" and it can be claimed that whatever is true of Tully is true of Cicero. However, we cannot apply Leibniz's law in a counterfactual situation, without having the same criterion or some other criterion common to both the names to fix or re-fix the references in that counterfactual situation. Cicero might lack the property of being a good orator in a counterfactual situation and Tully might not. Only under such circumstances in a counterfactual situation where both the names "Tully" and "Cicero" have one and the same criterion to fix or re-fix the reference of



the names in that counterfactual situation or possible world, the Leibnizian law would hold.

It is not difficult to see that the same analysis would hold for the law of identity. Consider for example, the true statements, "Water is  $H_2O$ " and " $H_2O$  is Hydroxide". In a possible world, however, we can say that "Water is not Hydroxide" if in that world the two terms "Water" and "Hydroxide" are not co-referential. Therefore, we cannot say that water in our world is identical to Hydroxide in the possible world. However, this is not to say that water is not water in a possible world if "water" is taken to be a rigid designator. Thus the law of identity holds valid in our world, and in a possible world taken individually; but not across possible worlds.

Department of Humanities  
and Social Sciences

P. R. BHAT

L. I. T, Powai,  
BOMBAY-400 076

#### NOTES

1. S. Kripke, "Identity and Necessity" in Stephen P. Schwartz ed. *Naming, Necessity, and Natural Kinds* pp. 72-77 and 89. Also see *Naming and Necessity* by the same author, Basil Blackwell 1980 pp. 99-108.
2. "Identity and Necessity" p. 76 (Henceforth I & N). And also see *Naming and Necessity* pp. 110, 128-138. (Henceforth NN).
3. I & N, p. 88.
4. I & N, p. 78 and NN, pp. 48-49
5. I & N, p. 79 and NN, p. 78.
6. See I & N, pp. 80-82. Here Kripke claims that people have taken 'possible world' as a foreign country or a distant planet. Also see NN pp. 15, 43-53.
7. I & N, p. 76, also see NN, pp. 99-100.
8. NN, pp. 143-144.

...3



9. These definite descriptions meet the noncircularity condition of Kripke for effective fixing of reference. *NN*, pp. 68-73.
10. *NN*, p. 130.
11. *NN*, pp. 77-78. Also see *I & N*, pp. 90-91.
12. *NN*, pp. 7-9.
13. See W. V. Quine's article "Reference and Modality" in *Reference and Modality* ed. L. Linsky, (Oxford University Press, 1971) p. 30. Here Quine maintains that certain properties of object follow from our ways of specifying them.
14. If the language used in stating an identity statement is English, we should describe the counterfactual situation in English. If the language used in stating an identity statement is German, the counterfactual situation should be described in German.
15. The cluster theory as depicted by Kripke is the one which maintains that the meaning of a name is determined by the important properties of the object it refers to. Searle and Wittgenstein are said to have maintained this view. See *NN*, pp. 30-38, 60-61.
16. Kripke has never made it clear as to what would constitute the meaning of proper names. But he openly criticizes the Cluster theory of meaning.
17. *NN*, p. 78.
18. *I & N*, p. 89.
19. *I & N*, p. 91.
20. *I & N*, pp. 91-92. Also see *NN*, pp. 57-68.
21. *I & N*, p. 78.
22. *NN*, pp. 77-78.
23. *NN*, p. 7.
24. *NN*, p. 76. Also see *I & N*, pp. 80, 82.
25. *NN*, p. 78.
26. *NN*, p. 18.
27. *NN*, p. 27.
28. *NN*, pp. 52-53.
29. *NN*, p. 36.
30. *NN*, p. 103.
31. *NN*, pp. 103-104.
32. See Kripke's formulation of Quine's objection. *NN*, pp. 42-53.
33. See J. R. Searle on "Proper Names", *Mind*, Vol. 67 (1958), See pp. 166-173.
34. See *Preface to Naming and Necessity*, p. 20.
35. *NN*, pp. 91-97.



## HAS GOD'S MYSTERY BEEN REVEALED TO MODERN SCIENCE?

Physicists believe that Olber's paradox and an expanding universe theory of creation points to a radius of our universe which can be timed. Do we as we look at the blackness between the stars at night see the primordial abyss from which our universe was created? Are we, indeed, looking at the beginning of time as we look at the space between the stars? Is our universe expending and is it bounded? If so, how will we avoid the "Big Crunch" of implosion as Dr. Stephen Hawking contemplates? The answers to these questions pose the most relevant issue because man's consciousness is imposed to learn the truth. The truth is the way to enlightenment.

Look at the experimentally assured duality of reality. Because we can imagine that spatially spherical symmetry of the universe Newton came to reflect that the limiting condition of the constant limit for 0 at spatial infinity leads to the view that the density of matter becomes zero at infinity. Einstein says it then follows from Poisson's equation  $\nabla^2 \phi = 4\pi K\rho$ , that, in order that  $\phi$  may tend to a limit at infinity, the mean density  $\rho$  must decrease toward zero more rapidly than  $1/r^3$  as the distance  $r$  from the center increases. Einstein further states that there is a finite ratio of densities corresponding to the finite difference of potential between the center and spatial  $\infty$ . A vanishing of the density at infinity implies a vanishing of the density at the center.<sup>1</sup>

Received : 5-4-87



David Hume believed most people naturally assent to the definition of a judicious and quite elegant poet who said, "Virtue (for mere good-nature is a fool) is sense and spirit with humanity."

Hume declares, "What pretensions has a man to our generous assistance or good offices, who has dissipated his wealth in profuse expenses, idle vanities, chimerical projects, dissolute pleasures or extravagant gaming? These vices bring misery unpitied, and contempt on every one addicted to them."<sup>2</sup>

Then we have a need for an absolute normative ethics. I believe everyone has a sense of it, the need for the social element of contract and exchange. I ask then was it not an infinitely judicious Bertrand Russell who wrote Einstein in 1955, "If only man would remember his humanity, and forget the rest." The need for the sense of the absolute, the infinity, is mathematical. Professor Dicke, who took Einstein's place at Princeton, said all mathematics breaks down to plus and minus infinities the instant before the big bang, the instant before creation, before Planck time  $10^{-43}$  sec. after it all started. Professor Alan Guth of MIT says it all started with one primordial bubble that was dense and hot, one bubble among a sea of primordial chaos. Science believes that the universe is measured by time, with the expansion, but it is not. General Relativity says clearly the radius of the universe is independent of time.<sup>3</sup>

Einstein then admitted others thought he might be wrong. A Russian mathematician, Friedman, in the 20's, accepted the first postulate of General Relativity but rejected the second. Science was determined to know what God knew about the universe, namely everything. In order for man to equate time with the radius of space he then chose a finite universe. It was easy to imagine a bubble-type universe, a spherically symmetrical one in which the average density of matter is everywhere the same and



different from zero, according to General Relativity. Descartes taught us there exists no space empty of field. It became necessary for science to accept that the field is ultimately explained in terms of ponderable masses, point-masses. In the nineteen-twenties, science proved the particle, the electron exhibited wave properties as well. The duality is assured, all nature shows the plus-minus, the duality of natural antithesis, of yes and no. All point-masses are filled then by point masses, or fields. The size of the structure depended upon its spatiality, or distance, to General Relativity. Einstein could accomplish this because the velocity of light is a natural constant,  $3 \times 10^{10}$  cm/sec. All symmetry reductions in physics seem to come to the speed of light and the Newtonian gravitational constant. Even the radius of the universe in Einstein's equation is a symmetry reduction of the speed of light, and the equation contains the Newtonian constant for gravitation. Spinoza teaches us that when science presumes quantity to be infinite the next step is to believe corporeal substance must be infinite. Hence it is then argued that corporeal substance cannot pertain to the essence of God. The reasoning is that substance suffers and God cannot; so God cannot be substance. The question of wonder about an unknowable entity becomes, then, non-existent. Yet is this not based upon the perception of reality to be of substance, knowable is ideal, in the abstract? Therefore man has decided he can measure the universe without empirically measuring it. Does this action not fall apart from the realm of science, namely that which is knowable and empirically demonstrable. Hume would want substance and event repeated to make sure that perception of essence of the idea is itself intrinsically real.

I wonder what the nature of the dilemma has become. The enigmatic radius to a universe that has been timed in its existence, down to a relative infinitesimal of a second, has not



been timed. For is not time a function of charge and charge a function of mass. The extension of the substance of mass is knowable relative to the field of the perceptual coordinate system according to Einstein. Newton saw the particulate clearly, yet Newton knew of infinity too. Newton too accepted the duality, that balance created by  $\pm 1$ . To Einstein the balance of the gravitational tensor  $g_{uv}$  depends upon  $\pm 1$ , and Einstein let  $c = 1$ .<sup>4</sup>

Pythagorus saw that  $0 = \infty$ , so did Spinoza and Einstein.<sup>5</sup>

Philosophy asks science, "What happened before Planck's time, before that critical  $10^{-43}$  sec. after the big bang started?" I ask what meaning did time have before this universe had its present spatial extension? Time is one of four dimensions to our sense of reality. We can't see past the stars because our senses have not been physically able to do so yet. Olber's paradox and enigma is still an enigma because if we see blackness past stars as 'something' then we are perceiving what is not an end. If we perceive the blackness as nothing then we must say we have perceived nothing. Having perceived nothing, that does not presuppose we see before time began. If we perceives nothing and we don't know where the boundary is between something and nothing, we can't possibly measure it with time. The reason is that time is relative to the perceiver; and perception is dependent upon the ponderable body of the corpuscle of light as well as the constancy of the velocity of light. Philosophy wonders about Planck time  $10^{-43}$ , this numerical symmetry reduction exponential factor, and knows that man does not know how a universe could go from  $10^{-43}$  sec to  $\pm$  infinity instantaneously. Philosophy knows man is an infinity concerned consciousness, and sees nothing. Philosophy knows there is an absolute sense to man's concern for right and wrong, good and evil. Einstein notes a strange difficulty with the current general philosophy of science.



The interpretation of the galactic line-shift discovered by Hubble as an expansion leads to an origin of this expansion which lies "only" about  $10^9$  years ago. Yet physical astronomy shows that it is likely that the development of the stars and star systems takes considerably longer. Einstein declares, "In no way is it known how this incongruity is to be overcome." Furthermore, "The theory of expanding space, together with the empirical data of astronomy, permit no decision to be reached about the finite or infinite character of space; while the original static hypothesis of space yielded the closure (finiteness) of space."<sup>5</sup>

John Locke said that whatever we consider as one thing, whether a real being or idea, suggests to us the understanding of the idea of unity. The philosopher wants to distinguish also the thing and the idea of the thing, the substance and the idea of substance. A Platonic Ideal of idea implies an infinity and a unity simultaneously, which implies a single coordinate system of objective reality. This gives the philosopher of science a sense of self and a sense of everything else. If one takes himself as a point-mass, one, compared to an infinite sea of other particulates, then the sense of enlightenment lends credibility to one being with everything. Consciousness may perceive the self as relatively nothing compared to everything else, simultaneously zero is equal to itself, one thing, which is also everything of itself, and has cognition of everything. Another way of saying it is to let peace equal nothing, complete harmony of self, total quietude; which is at once everything and itself, nothing.

The relativity of perception of what is and the sense of a boundary to our universe depend upon the reality of finiteness. However, we conceive the infinite and are not ideas as real things as ponderable bodies, as photons of light are corpuscular fields of probability matter. The duality of natural antithesis, the yes and no to everything ultimate gives man an open mind to the



unknown, gives man the path of philosophy of science. As we move in ascendance with a positive ontological status, in a teleologically dynamic way, we continue to wonder about the miracles yet to be accomplished by looking at our consciousness and objectively growing together.<sup>6</sup>

### CONCLUSION

The enigma that is our universe is still open to question. Indeed, the questions remain the same while the answers change with perception as time flows inexorably to the infinite.

Olber's paradox remains exactly that – a paradox, incongruous with all explanations of an expanding universe whose outer fringe of star systems recede at speeds as fast as light itself. Einstein shows us clearly that the mystery of the expanse of night sky dotted by twinkling stars separated by an intrinsic blackness has not been revealed. The physical age of stars and star systems appears clearly to be greater than the  $10^9$  years derived from the galactic red shift of incoming light as was delineated by Hubble.

Are we not then forced to look at the general Theory of Relativity again, and reexamine the second postulate which states the radius of space is independent of time? Can we know then, without any existential doubt, that the Big Bang actually occurred?

Indeed, the wonder of Creation is just as immeasurably marvelous as ever, the enigma just as deeply rooted in a finite temporal perception as ever, the unknowable infinities of our universe as unreachable as ever. Yet must we pursue the growth of philosophy of science.

Perspectivism Foundation, JERRY I. JACOBSON  
103, Oakwood Drive  
JUPITAR, FL 33458 (U.S.A.)



NOTES

1. A. Einstein, "Cosmological Considerations on the General Theory of Relativity" 1917 Prussian Academy of Science, *The Principle of Relativity*.
2. D. Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals." Reprinted from the edition of 1777, Open Court Publisher 1966. p. 161.
3. A. Einstein, "Relativity", Bonanza Books 1961, p. 133.
4. A. Einstein, *Out of My Later Years*, Philosophical Library, 1955.
5. Baruch Spinoza, *Western Philosophy*, Edited by S. Cahn, Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis, 1977, p. 409; A. Einstein, *The Principle of Relativity*, Dover Publications 1952; *Relativity*, Bonanza Books, N. Y., 1961, p. 134.
6. J. Jacobson, *The Secret of Life*, Philosophical Library 1933; J. Jacobson *Perspectivism In Art*, Philosophical Library, N. Y. C. 1973, p 124.



## INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATIONS

Daya Krishna and A. M. Ghose ( eds ) **Contemporary Philosophical Problems : Some Classical Indian Perspectives**, Rs. 10/-

S. V. Bokil ( Tran ) **Elements of Metaphysics Within the Reach of Everyone**, Rs. 25/-

A. P. Rao, **Three Lectures on John Rawls**, Rs. 10/-

Ramchandra Gandhi (ed) **Language, Tradition and Modern Civilization**, Rs. 50/-

S. S. Barlingay, **Beliefs, Reasons and Reflections**, Rs. 70/-

Daya Krishna, A. M. Ghose and P. K. Srivastav (eds)  
**The Philosophy of Kalidas Bhattacharyya**, Rs. 60/-

M. P. Marathe, Meena A. Kelkar and P. P. Gokhale (eds)  
**Studies in Jainism**, Rs. 50/-

R. Sundara Rajan, **Innovative Competence and Social Change**, Rs. 25/-

S. S. Barlingay ( ed ), **A Critical Survey of Completed Research Work in Philosophy in Indian Universities ( upto 1980 )**, Part I, Rs. 50/-

R. K. Gupta, **Exercises in Conceptual Understanding**, Rs. 25/-

Vidyut Aklujkar, **Primacy of Linguistic Units**, Rs. 30/-

**Contact :** The Editor,  
Indian Philosophical Quarterly  
Department of Philosophy  
University of Poona,  
Poona-411 007.



## SCHOPENHAUER ON WILL : A CRITIQUE

The concept of 'Will' occupies the central place in Schopenhauer's intellectual framework which provides the analytical basis of all his philosophical arguments. Despite being born in the Kantian tradition Schopenhauer adopted a fundamentally different approach in his critical metaphysical and epistemological theories and it is essentially his concept of 'Will' which makes him so different from Kant. But again it is also the 'Will' that marks his deep influence on the subsequent great modern thinkers as Nietzsche, Freud and Wittgenstein. The beauty of Schopenhauer's *Will* lies in its *role* as an unifying thread in his logical system which begins from the concept of *Will* as the *thing-in-itself* and ends in the *negation* of that very Will. In this marvellous intellectual endeavour Schopenhauer travelled a long way and in his long journey in search of the truth Schopenhauer demonstrated his remarkable ability and ingenious power in providing a logically infallible system that gives a unity to all the diverse *elements* in this *matrix* of the *Will*. The essence of this paper will be to argue that this unity will break down if the relationships between different elements of the matrix are not unique. In fact we shall show that there are cases where Schopenhauer was unable to provide such unique relationships whereas in some other cases the relationships are not sufficiently strong to be defensible.

Schopenhauer took some pride in identifying his concept of *Will* with Kant's *thing-in-itself*. While Kant maintained that though the *noumena*, the *things-in-themselves*, exist as the

Received : 3-1-88



ground of all phenomena, yet we cannot know them; they are beyond our knowledge, nor we can ever say anything 'positive' about them. Thus the concept of the noumena or things-in-themselves in Kantian philosophy is somewhat 'negative' – it is the unknown and unknowable. (Hence the problem of bringing out a satisfactory link between the noumenal self and the phenomenal self is left in Kant's theory as a mystery.) But Schopenhauer not only thought that something 'positive' could be said about the thing-in-itself, he really believed that there is a good argument for the conclusion that the thing-in-itself is Will. He argues as follows: There is a possibility for us to have a direct knowledge of the Will in the consciousness of ourselves. But the object of that consciousness cannot be mere phenomena; rather it is something different from the phenomena in the respect that it is an object of direct and unconditioned knowledge. For the same reason it is not bound to the principle of sufficient reason and so must be other than mere phenomena. Therefore, Schopenhauer concludes that it must be the thing-in-itself. But, as we shall argue later, this does not constitute a consistent proof of the proposition that the Will is in fact the thing-in-itself.

In the *WAR* Schopenhauer tries to establish that the whole world is the objectification of one and the same Will. He claims that no philosopher before him, not even Kant, had proper appreciation of this feature of Will. Whether or not his claim is justified, Schopenhauer is said "to have reversed the whole process of German philosophy, and to have looked at man from the side of irrational action and passion, things to which Kant's ethics and Hegel's system had done scant justice.<sup>1</sup> It may perhaps be admitted that Schopenhauer's concept of Will if had not reversed the traditional German philosophy in his life time, it had subsequently revolutionized the mode of philosophical thinking in many dimensions.



Schopenhauer by rejecting Kant's unrecognizable 'thing-in-itself' maintained that blind and irrational Will was the essence of the world. Therefore Schopenhauer's philosophy of irrationalism being a reversal of the traditional approach à la Kant, shows the ultimate reality as antithetical to all reason;<sup>2</sup> and as what constitutes the metaphysical essence of the world.<sup>3</sup> This ultimate reality which Kant gave up as unknown and unknowable, Schopenhauer identified as the Will and went on to emphasize its presence in all forms of life and in all modes of existence.

The main characteristic of the Will, according to Schopenhauer, is a perpetual striving which has no end whatsoever, and this is inherently irrational. Schopenhauer's conception of the Will is such that it can never rest content. It is a 'blind Will.' The 'blind will' never sets any definite object before it, and no object can possibly satisfy it. Indeed one of the reasons why Schopenhauer calls the Will 'blind' is that it has no definite object which it strives to attain. As soon as it seems to attain its object it moves away from it in its search for an unattainable ideal. Thus the will as the thing-in-itself by nature is free from all aims and limits.<sup>4</sup>

But if freedom from all aim is the real nature of the Will which is the thing-in-itself and which is also a blind striving, then how can we accept this world which is the self-objectification of that Will and is also full of purposeful activities. To say that the world, which is full of purposeful activity, is the objectification of a sheer blind, aimless Will is not only hardly convincing but also contradictory to itself.<sup>5</sup> Either the world being the manifestation of a blind Will must be a chaotic one which it is not, or, the Will as the thing-in-itself must possess a definite aim behind its self-objectification into a purposefully active world. Schopenhauer never bothered to explain further



than to say that it is inexplicable how the self-objectification of the Will in the phenomenal world takes place.

The Will as the thing-in-itself is quite different from its manifestations. It is entirely free from all forms of phenomenal appearance which are foreign to the Will in itself. The Will as the thing-in-itself lies outside the province of the principle of sufficient reason in all its forms, and is consequently groundless. Further, the Will itself is free from all multiplicities, whereas its manifestations in time and space are innumerable. The Will as the thing-in-itself is one; but not in the sense in which an object is one nor in the sense in which a concept is one. It is one as that which lies outside time and space, these later being *principium individuationis*, i.e., the conditions of the possibility of multiplicity.<sup>6</sup> Although the particular phenomenon of the Will has a temporal beginning and end, the Will as the thing-in-itself is not affected by it. It is self-caused and self-determining.<sup>7</sup>

After having identified the thing-in-itself with the Will, Schopenhauer tries to explain the whole world as the objectification of that Will. In this scheme of analysis Schopenhauer first begins with the human body as the highest and the clearest manifestation of the Will. For he maintains that the Will is objectified in its highest degree in the human Will. At the same time he also seems to believe that although the Will finds its clearest and fullest objectification in man, man alone does not express its full being. The full significance of the Will is presented in its various manifestations, that is, right from the human-beings through the *animal* and *vegetable kingdom*, down to the *unorganised nature* – all taken together. According to Schopenhauer, the difference lies only in the degree of its manifestations.

It seems however that Schopenhauer's notion of the "degrees" of the manifestation of the Will is somewhat confusing and



misleading. For instance, suppose that A, B, C and D – who are all human beings in whom ‘anger’ is present in some degree. Now the same emotion of anger is expressed in varied degrees in each of them; that is, A becomes more violent than B during the state of anger whereas C and D’s anger is lesser than even B. Here we understand that the same anger is expressed but in different degrees in all four cases. But if in the same way we accept Schopenhauer’s doctrine of the degrees of manifestation of the Will in different grades, there is an implausible consequence. There is no common denominator between a man and a stone such that we can conceive any difference between them as merely a difference in degree only.

The human will, as mentioned already, has been placed at the top of all the gradations. Schopenhauer assigns the privilege of knowing the will to human beings alone, because we are something more than mere subjects of knowledge. For, were we mere knowing subjects, “a winged cherub without a body”<sup>3</sup>, the transition from the world as mere ideal representation to what it is an ideal representation of would not have been possible. Being the knowing subject, we know everything in this world as ideal representation. In as much the same way we also perceive our body as an ideal representation. And this is the peculiarity that distinguishes ourselves from other objects, since in other respects there is no difference. This peculiarity which makes a human being something different from the other objects also gives him the privilege of acquiring double knowledge of his body, that is, one can know one’s body as ideal representation and also can know it as it is in itself, i.e., as will.

According to Schopenhauer, every particular act of Will is followed by a movement of body.<sup>9</sup> But this does not mean that the relation between the act of will and the movement of the body is a causal one. Rather it is a kind of identical relation, as



he holds. The two are, according to Schopenhauer, one and the same thing, but given in two different ways—that is immediately given as will, and also given as ideal representation in perception. In this way Schopenhauer argues that the whole body is nothing but objectified will, i.e., will become ideal representation. In a sense he calls the body the “objectivity of will”.<sup>10</sup>

Just as every act of will is at once also a visible act of the body, every visible impression upon the body is similarly an impression upon the will. “My body and my will are one” — Schopenhauer terms this a “philosophical truth.”<sup>11</sup> We cannot know this will in us as a whole or as a unity. Nor can it be known in its nature completely. This will can be known only in its particular acts, and therefore only in time, the latter being the form of the phenomenal aspect of the body, just as it is the form of every object. Hence it follows from this that the will is the knowledge *a priori* of the body, and the body is the knowledge *a posteriori* of the will.<sup>12</sup>

Since one's body is a condition of the knowledge of his will, nobody can imagine his will apart from his body. The will in its highest objectification, that is, in human beings, manifests itself in both ways—as the subject as well as the object of knowledge. It is because of this that Schopenhauer says that the object becomes one with the subject and this union is a miracle. However, the knowledge of the identity of will and body its elf being the most direct knowledge, it can never be demonstrated.<sup>13</sup>

In order to establish that the human body is the objectified will, Schopenhauer proceeds to give a teleological analysis of the body.<sup>14</sup> Everything in the body is taken as the visible expression of our principal desires. The various parts of our body correspond to these desires through which the will expresses itself. For example, the principal desire of hunger and sex are objecti-



fied in teeth, throat, bowels and in the organs of generation.<sup>15</sup> Similarly the will to know builds the brain, just as the will to grasp forms the hands.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, these pairs—the forms of will on the one hand, and the different parts of the body on the other, are but two sides of the same reality. This is best seen, as Schopenhauer maintains, in *emotions* where the feeling and the internal bodily changes form one complex unit.<sup>17</sup> It may be argued however that this identity between will and body, as seen by Schopenhauer in emotion, cannot always be established. Let us take a few examples of emotion like anger, fear, joy etc., which are generally found to be expressed in some typical behaviour of the person undergoing that particular emotion. When a man is angry, we see a frowning face or when somebody is happy we see him or her smiling. Similarly, we can also say that while a smiling face indicates the happy mood of the person smiling, a gloomy face, in contrast is a good indication that the man is upset. But it will be a great mistake to draw the conclusion from the above example that the human body and will are identical. For we can site some other example where we do not see a proper correspondence between the two. Take an example of the complicated mental state of someone who comes to know that his wife died during delivery but has given birth to a charming boy — here the person may be very happy to know that he has got a son but is extremely broken to know about his wife's death (whom he loved very much). He may remain silent, with a gloomy face, may even cry, but that does not mean that he is unhappy to get a son, though his crying or not smiling may seem to indicate so. Nor can we say that he is happy to know that his wife is dead when we see him holding the baby very eagerly.

... 4



Therefore, it is not always necessary that a particular act of will is followed by a particular movement of the body in an emotional state. Nor is it true that a particular movement of the body is always in correspondence with a typical emotion or mental state. For instance, a person may be trembling out of great fear while another may be so out of anger. Hence, trembling is not a typical sign to represent anger or fear, rather it may represent both.

Thus knowing bodily reactions in an emotional state is not the same thing as knowing the state of mind. and hence mind and body are not identically related to each other as so emphatically claimed by Schopenhauer.

Nevertheless, there can be some kind of relationship between the body and will. For instance, there may be a relationship of implications which can be stated as follows : If 'a' stands for will and 'b' stands for body, then, 'a' might imply 'b' ( $a \rightarrow b$ ) even though they are not the same thing. At the same time, if 'b' also implies 'a' ( $b \rightarrow a$ ), then the relationship between 'a' and 'b' can be stated as one to one. In other words, a one to one relationship between 'a' and 'b' means that 'a' implies 'b' as well as 'b' implies 'a' though they are not the same thing. Therefore, even if mind and body are not identically related as claimed by Schopenhauer (i.e.,  $a = b$ ), we can still think of a possibility for that. A particular reaction of body need not necessarily imply a particular state of mind though, however, such a relationship might exist or happen contingently. Similarly, a typical emotion may not necessarily lead to a particular bodily movement though that kind of relationship too may exist occasionally. Thus, to prove the existence of an identical relationship between body and will is not a kind of logical identity as Schopenhauer claimed but a contingent one.



Having discussed the relationship between the will and body let us now see how Schopenhauer looks at the relationship between the will and intellect. Schopenhauer maintains that the will which as the thing-in-itself is unconscious, constitutes the real nature of human beings. But it seems to be contradicted when it is further said that man, whose essential nature is consciousness, is constituted by unconscious will. In order to establish this Schopenhauer wants us to believe that intellect, which conditioned consciousness, is only a product of the will. He compares the intellect to a parasite<sup>18</sup> which absolutely depends upon the will.

In line with his teleological analysis, according to which every part of the body is a visible expression of our principal desires, Schopenhauer explains that the brain, whose function intellect is, is formed by the presence of the will to know in us.<sup>19</sup> Intellect is said to be a mere accident of our being which can never directly enter into our inner nature. According to Schopenhauer the intellect is produced by the will in the organism only in order to know the phenomenal world (which includes the physical body) presented by the thing-in-itself under the forms of knowledge. However, Schopenhauer's this explanation does not tally with his earlier description of the intellect as a parasite since a parasite merely lives off another but gives no useful return, whereas the intellect here serves the purpose of knowing the phenomenal world to the organism which otherwise is just impossible.

The organism, according to Schopenhauer, being the immediate manifestation of the will, is primary while the intellect is only a secondary phenomenon. He uses a couple of simile to explain the relationship between the will and the intellect. According to him, if a plant is taken as a symbol of consciousness, the root would stand for the will which is essential and original



and the 'corona' may be compared with the intellect which has sprung from the will. Here the point of separation/contact of the will and the intellect is the *I* which belongs to both. 'This I' is the self-conscious individual, which is said to be the 'connecting link of the whole phenomenon'. Because in the self-consciousness only the individual comes in contact with the phenomenal world as well as with the will in time, i.e., the will known in its particular act under the form of time. For this reason the individual is also said to be the "temporal starting point" of the phenomenon.<sup>20</sup>

Hence the intellect is said to be a servant of the will and merely serves the end of self-preservation of the individual. However, the most appropriate comparison in Schopenhauer's opinion regarding relationship of the two, i.e., the will and the intellect will be that of "strong blind man who carries on his shoulders the lame man who can see".<sup>21</sup> In a sense this example does some justification to some of the things Schopenhauer wants to say about the relationship between the two, that the will is blind and unconscious but having the efficacy whereas the intellect, though knowing, is unable to take action by itself. This comparison helps in bringing out what he wanted to say about the fact that the will or the functioning of the will without the intellect is blind and irrational but no intellect nor its function is possible without the will. Here the will like the strong blind man is carrying the intellect like the lame man who can see on his shoulders.

Thus in opposition to the usual view (traced back to Anaxagoras) according to which intelligence is the origin of everything, Schopenhauer holds that it is the unconscious will which constitutes the metaphysical substratum of the organism.<sup>22</sup> Hence, the will which is treated in other system as the last, is the very first with Schopenhauer.<sup>23</sup>



But what surprises us is the fact that the will which is so far explained by him as the very first, the 'master' so to say in his word, is at times governed or ruled by the servant, that is, the intellect. According to Schopenhauer the intellect can even manage to deny either temporarily or permanently the will of which it is a mere objectification. Hamlyn has rightly called it therefore a paradox<sup>24</sup> Schopenhauer tries to solve the problem by giving some degree of autonomy to the operation of the intellect. For him the intellect, though is granted with a degree of autonomy, is ultimately in the service of the will. It is because the intellect is also like everything else, a mere objectification of the will and therefore subject to its dominance. Like other organs objectifying our other needs, the brain is the objectification of the intellect; and so it may function in ways which are different from other organs functioning. The brain may be given some autonomy from the will in functioning but yet the brain's functioning also depends on the functioning of the organism as a whole since the organism as whole is the objectification of the will. In this sense, the intellect ultimately depends upon the will which is manifested as the will-to-live in the organism.

It needs to be emphasized at this point that in Schopenhauer's philosophy the relationship between the will and the intellect assumes a very crucial role. It determines to a large measure his epistemology, metaphysics and ethics.<sup>25</sup> In spite of this, however, it is also true that Schopenhauer was not successful in portraying a single and a unique relationship between the two. Instead, as one goes through his writings one eventually comes across with different relationships at various stages in the development of his argument. So it becomes rather confusing or even puzzling too. For instance, at some point Schopenhauer argues that the intellect cannot know the will as the thing-in-itself<sup>26</sup> whereas at some other point he seems to believe exactly the



opposite that the intellect can know the will as the thing-in-itself. Similarly, intellect being considered by Schopenhauer as the servant<sup>27</sup> of the will has also been allowed to deny the will, at times.<sup>28</sup> It is therefore probable that one might even find some more patterns of the will and intellect relationship in Schopenhauer.<sup>29</sup> This multiplicity of the relationship between the will and intellect gives rise to a number of conceptual problems that arise mostly from the fact that all different patterns may not be logically consistent with each other. The fact that Schopenhauer first assumes a given pattern and then in the course of his argument he changes or reinterprets the pattern being assumed suggest not only that he failed to carry out his inquiry with one single pattern but also that it may lead to various ambiguities in his basic philosophical standpoint. If it is not to be so then it must imply that there is some unifying principle that binds all possible patterns into a single and an unique pattern or relationship and hence there is no logical flaw in his analysis.

So far we have seen how Schopenhauer attempted to modify in his own way the Kantian approach. And it has been remarked that the "uniqueness of Schopenhauer's system does not derive from any exceptionally novel insights, but from the manner in which he was able to weave extremely diverse strands of thought into a single encompassing system".<sup>30</sup> It is true that Schopenhauer exhibited an originality and inventiveness in the subsequent development of the Kantian philosophy and will always be accredited with the honour of introducing a drastic change in the structure of the thought of his time. Nevertheless, it must not make us ignore the shortcomings in his endeavour to modify the Kantian thought.

As we have already seen, in his attempt to bring out a satisfactory link between the noumenal self and the phenomenal self through the identification of body and will, Schopenhauer was



only partially successful, that is, the relationship is only a contingent one and not a logical one as was thought by him. Similar or even worse is the case with his attempt to identify the thing-in-itself with the will. Strictly speaking we are not given any reason for the identification apart from that one of his own reason for thinking that there is a thing-in-itself. Even his reason for thinking that there is a thing-in-itself does not and cannot justify the fact that it must be the will alone and not anything else. One possible reason why Schopenhauer believes in the existence of a thing-in-itself may be because we can have another kind of knowledge which is different from ordinary knowledge or conditional knowledge of phenomena. This we can have directly and unconditionally; and the same we know when we act so. This is to say – we know that we act directly and unconditionally and anything known conditionally is a mere representation. Thus, what we can know directly and immediately, that which is unconditional, cannot be representation. Hence Schopenhauer believes it must be something beyond representation and so it is the thing-in-itself. However, we cannot help saying that to prove that there is something different from representation does not necessarily imply that thing must be the thing-in-itself. And this is what Schopenhauer perhaps failed to see. Even if we agree with him that we can know in an unconditional way that we act and that that knowledge is different from our knowledge of phenomena, it does not necessarily follow that we can also know that which is beyond phenomena. The relationship between the non-phenomenal and the phenomenal still remains unclear. Therefore, it is a mere assumption that anything non-phenomenal must be the ground of phenomena (which Kant said earlier) or beyond the phenomena and so it is the thing-in-itself. This shows that Schopenhauer's argument for believing in the existence of a thing-in-itself and his identification of it with the will becomes the same thing. Before trying to establish that



there is a thing-in-itself and it is the will, Schopenhauer should have proved the premise that anything that is not a representation is a thing-in-itself and also that anything that is a thing-in-itself is the will.<sup>31</sup>

In order to justify his claim for the identification of the thing-in-itself with the will, Schopenhauer draws out difference between human beings and the rest of the objectifications of the will. For, he maintains that it is human beings alone who can act in *true* sense and can have a direct and unconditional awareness of that fact, whereas the rest of nature though being the objectification of the same will cannot do so. All this seems to be rather confusing and perhaps might only help those critics who maintain that Schopenhauer was not a very systematic thinker at times.<sup>32</sup> At any rate it often becomes difficult to understand how different arguments fit together in Schopenhauer's system of thought. And this is very true in the present issue. For he maintains that the whole world is the objectification of the same will and yet he talks about *four distinct grades* wherein he places human beings at the very top. Again he says that only human beings can act in a true sense and not the other manifestations of the will. However, what all these facts can at best teach us is that we can learn different aspects of our action and the will and also know the position of the human beings in Schopenhauer's estimation of things but it is far from justifying the claim that the will is the thing-in-itself.

Obviously then the question which might arise is that what is the relevance of Schopenhauer's concept of will within his philosophy as well as in relation to other philosophers. Within his philosophy the concept of will plays the pivotal role because it provides the basis of his anti-intellectualism. Schopenhauer's major achievement lies in that. His anti-intellectualism has brought out a reversal of traditional German philosophy which



was during his time at the height of Rationalism. Whether Schopenhauer's claim that no philosopher before him, not even Kant, had proper appreciation of the concept of will is true or not, is certainly true of him that he had exceptional influence on subsequent thought. Undoubtedly the parent source of modern anti-intellectualist stream of thinking is Schopenhauer, if Nietzsche, Freud and Wittgenstein could be regarded as being influenced by him. In relation to Kant, in particular, his concept of will has a special significance because it is with the help of the concept of will Schopenhauer put forward a remarkably original proof of the existence of unconditional knowledge. But he mistook this proof to be a proof of the thing-in-itself which is unknown and unknowable in Kant. Even if Schopenhauer could not provide a satisfactory answer to the problem of Kant's indeterminacy, he has contributed positively towards the advancement of our domain of knowledge. But within his own domain of thought, Schopenhauer could not provide a logically consistent analysis. The various manifestations of will and their relations to one another could not be shown to be unique or one-to-one by Schopenhauer. This logical inconsistency has reduced the uniqueness of his concept of will to a large extent.<sup>33</sup>

C/o Alokesh Barua  
Sr. Warden, Narmada Hostel  
J. N. U.  
NEW DELHI-110 067

**ARATI BARUA**



## NOTES

1. Mo., C. T. J., "Schopenhauer's System in its Philosophical Significance", *The Monist*, Vol. VII, 1896-97.
2. In this context we may refer to Schopenhauer's reaction to Hegel whom he used to call as 'clumsy charlatan'. For Hegel whatever is rational is real and whatever is real is rational. In contrast, Schopenhauer asserts that the world is not an embodiment of any such rational principle. Intellect, according to him, is the servant of will, which he takes to be the source of all forms of Rationalism, whether metaphysical or Scientific.
3. Patrick Gardiner remarks: "In Schopenhauer's conception of existence there was an explicit and uncompromising reversal of the traditional approach. He made it his object to show, not that the world is governed according to some beneficent teleological principle or that it is the embodiment of certain fundamental rational categories, but that, on the contrary, what lies at its centre is something antithetical to all reason and value, namely, a blind unconscious force or striving he termed 'Will'..... For Schopenhauer, in fact, all forms of rationalism-metaphysical and scientific alike-involve an illicit projection into the ultimate nature of reality of principles whose actual source and spring is the human intellect alone". See Patrick Gardiner, "Irrationalism" in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (ed.) Paul Edwards, (Collier McMillan, London, 1967), Vol. IV, p. 214.
4. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* (trans. by E. S. J. Payne; 2 vols., Indian Hills, Colorado: Faloon's Wing Press, 1958; paperback, New York: Dover, 1969), Vol. I, p. 164.
5. Bryan Magee, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, Oxford University Press: New York, 1983), pp. 237-8.
6. *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I, p. 112.
7. Schopenhauer himself says, "What Kant opposed as thing-in-itself to the mere appearance (to which appearance I give the more explicit name of "presentment") and held to be absolutely unknowable—that this thing-in-itself, I say, this substratum of all appearances, i. e., of all Nature, is no other than that which is immediately and perfectly familiar to us, in the inner most depths of our being, as will; that consequently this will, far from being, as all former philosophers assumed, inseparable from knowledge, and a mere result thereof, is radically different from and completely independent of knowledge (which is of quite secondary and later origin), and can therefore exist and manifest itself without it, as in point of fact it actually does in every department of Nature below the animal kingdom; that this will, as the sole thing-in-itself, the only truly real, the alone original and metaphysical, in a world where all



else is appearance merely, i. e., mere presentment, lends to everything whatsoever the force by which it comes to exist and operate.....". See, Arthur Schopenhauer, "The will in Nature" (tr.) in Jekyee, W. (ed.) *The Wisdom of Schopenhauer* (London, Watts and Co. 1911) p. 17.

8. *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I, p. 99.
9. *Ibid*, p. 100.
10. *Ibid*.
11. *Ibid*, p. 102.
12. *Ibid*, p. 100
13. *Ibid*, p. 102.
14. *Ibid*, p. 108.
15. It is in such ideas of Schopenhauer that one can see a direct relationship between his ideas on sexual instincts and Freud's concept of 'Libido'.
16. *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. II, p. 259.
17. Apart from this direct objectifications of the will in the human body, Schopenhauer also gives examples of indirect objectification. With reference to the nervous system he observes : "... the whole nervous system constitutes the antennae of the will, which it stretches within and without". See, Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, (trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp: 3 Vols. 7th ed.: London : Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd.,) Vol. II, p. 482.
18. "... the intellect is a mere accident of our being; for it is a function of the brain, which, together with the nerves and spinal cord connected with it, is a mere fruit, a product, nay, so far, a parasite of the rest of the organism; for it does not directly enter into its inner constitution, but merely serves the end of self-preservation by regulating the relations of the external world". *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. II, p. 411
19. "... the brain also, like everything else, is will". *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. III, p. 7.
20. "This I is the *pro tempore* identical subject of knowing and willing... It is the temporal starting-point and connecting link of the whole phenomenon, i. e., of the objectification of the will : it conditions indeed the phenomenon, but is also conditioned by it". *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. II, p. 413.
21. *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. II, p. 209.
22. "... for he (Anaxagoras) arbitrarily assumes a *Nous*, and intelligence, a creator of representations, as the first and original thing". *The World as Will and Idea* Vol. III, p. 2.



- "Schopenhauer, on the contrary, regarded reason as present only in man, a mere epiphenomenon in reality as whole". See, Maurice Mandelbaum, *History, Man and Reason*, p. 324.
23. "... all philosophers before me, from the first to the last, place the true being or the kernel of man in the *knowing* consciousness, and accordingly have conceived and explained the I, or, in the case of many of them, its transcendental hypostatis called soul, as primarily and essentially *knowing*, nay, thinking, and only in consequence of this, secondarily and derivatively, as willing ...". *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. II, p. 409.
  24. D. W. Hamlyn, *Schopenhauer*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, Boston and Henley), 1980, p. 102 and p. 169.
  25. Wayne Sheeks, "Schopenhauer's Solution of the Intellect-Will Problem" in Michael Fox (ed.) *Schopenhauer : His Philosophical Achievements*, (Sussex, 1983 ), p. 68.
  26. *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, p. 166.
  27. *Ibid*, p. 422.
  28. *Ibid*, p. 367.
  29. Wayne Sheeks, "Schopenhauer's Solution of the Intellect-Will Problem", in *Schopenhauer : His Philosophical Achievements*, p. 68.
  30. M. Mandelbaum, *History, Man and Reason*, p. 322.
  31. D. W. Hamlyn, *Schopenhauer*, p. 93.
  32. D. W. Hamlyn, "Schopenhauer on Action and Will", in *Idealism : Past and Present*, Royal Institute of Philosophy Lecture, Vol. 7, 1972-73, p. 127.
  33. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor P. A. Griffiths of the University of Warwick for valuable suggestions and to Prof. Mrinal Miri and Dr. C. P. M. Namboodiry for helpful comments.



January 1989

## YOUNG ON THE COHERENCE OF ANTI-REALIST RELATIVISM

In his paper, "Relatively Speaking : The Coherence of Anti-Realist Relativism" <sup>1</sup> James O. Young attempts to defend the position of anti-realist relativism against a series of arguments made by realists, attempting to establish the incoherence and self-refuting nature of the anti-realist relativist position. Young, after replying to the realist, says that if "realists are to confute anti-realism, they must demonstrate that it is an adequate semantic program, inferior to realism". <sup>2</sup> It is the aim of this paper to take the first steps towards such a demonstration.

For Young realism is "the doctrine according to which the truth of sentences is determined by the way things really are". <sup>3</sup> Truth is a relationship between sentences and reality. Anti-realist relativism on the other hand holds that "truth results from a relation between sentences within a theory : a sentence is true if warranted by a correct theory". <sup>4</sup> For the anti-realist, "[t]he truth of a sentence is not determinate but, rather, relative to the theory to which it owes its warrant". <sup>5</sup>

This form of relativism is thought by many of today's realists to be incoherent because it is allegedly self-defeating. The realist argues that if anti-realist relativism is by hypothesis taken to be correct, then it must be incorrect because it explicitly denies that any sentences, including the sentence expressing the position of anti-realist relativism, are true in virtue of reality. Therefore, the realist concludes, anti-realist relativism must be incorrect

Received : 12-6-87



Young points out that this argument is unsuccessful because it begs the question of the "correctness" of the realist account of "truth." All the anti-realist relativist is claiming is that their theory is "correct" in their sense of the word, "true" only relative to some theory.<sup>6</sup> They are not claiming that their theory is correct in virtue of reality.

What does the anti-realist relativist mean by the word 'correct' in his/her definition? We recall that for the anti-realist relativist, a sentence is true if warranted by a *correct* theory. The word 'correct' in this definition is important; if we were to say that a sentence is true if merely warranted by *a theory*, we would have a trivial definition of truth because then any arbitrary sentence could be shown to be true by choice of the right theory. On the other hand if 'correct' is taken to mean "true" again the anti-realist relativist is in trouble. If 'true' is defined in a realist sense, then the realist's self-refutation goes through. If 'true' is defined in an anti-realist relativist sense, then Young's definition is circular. It therefore seems that anti-realist relativism is incoherent.

One way in which Young could escape this dilemma is to give an *independent* definition of 'correct', a definition which is neutral between realism and relativism. The most plausible way to do this in my opinion is to say that a correct theory is one which satisfies various criteria of *justification*. These criteria may include high explanatory power, internal coherence, simplicity, problem-solving ability along with the critical ability to demonstrate inadequacies in competing theories. In this sense, anti-realist relativism is the position that a sentence is true if warranted by a *justified* theory. This is not an implausible position. Certain theoretical sentences in cosmology about black holes are taken to be "true" or probably "true", because they are deduc-



tions from a justified physical theory such as General Relativity and background statements.

Anti-realist relativism is not however an adequate general theory of truth. The reason for this is that anti-realist relativism begs important metaphysical questions which realism does not. My first objection is that there are many sentences which are intuitively "true" but do not have warrant from *a* justified theory, that is a unique theory. This is what I take 'a' to mean in Young's definition of anti-realist relativism. Now the sentence :

(1) There are objects in the universe

is an intuitively "true" sentence. This sentence may well have some deep metaphysical presupposition, but there is no reason whatsoever to believe that its "truth" is a function of being warranted by *a* justified theory because there are an indefinite number of justified theories from physics and sociology that would imply (1). There seems to be no *unique* theory which gives theoretical warrant to this sentence, unlike the example above about certain properties of black holes. The burden of proof is upon the anti-realist relativist to demonstrate that this is not so.

A second objection to anti-realist relativism is that there may be "true" sentences which are "true" as a brute fact and not because they are warranted by some justified theory. In a 'complete' explanation of nature it is not contradictory to suppose that certain facts about the world receive no answer, such as why the most basic of elementary particles have a certain physical property. If there are brute facts about reality then there will be intuitively "true" sentences which are not warranted by some justified theory. Again the burden of proof is upon the shoulders of the anti-realist relativist, this time to prove that there can be no brute facts about reality.



A third objection to anti-realist relativism is that it is logically possible for a maximally justified theory to be intuitively "false." This objection may seem to be based upon realist intuitions so it is necessary to advance this criticism with caution. Could there be a logical gap between "*truth*" and *justification*? Consider the hypothesis dear to the hearts of epistemological sceptics, that all of my external world beliefs are "false" because I am a brain in a vat being deceived by an evil scientist. If there was no external world at all, then many maximally justified theories would be false – namely all of those theories attempting to make sense of a non-existent external world. The evil scientist hypothesis is regarded by most philosophers as an invalid way of supporting epistemological scepticism because it is at best a bare logical possibility. Despite interesting and controversial arguments from Hilary Putnam attempting to establish that we could not possibly be brains in a vat,<sup>7</sup> it is not unreasonable to suppose that the evil scientist hypothesis is a logically possible "truth". It is for one thing something which can be clearly conceived in the imagination, unlike a round square. Whilst the notion of a perfect deception may be of little epistemological interest, this thought experiment does show that there is a logical gap between "*truth*" and *justification*. Once more the anti-realist relativist must show otherwise.

I have given three reasons why I believe Young's form of anti-realist relativism cannot provide us with an adequate general theory of truth. My objections take the form of burden of proof arguments, so I cannot claim to have decisively refuted anti-realist relativism. Nevertheless, I do not see how the burden of proof can be discharged. Further, the mere fact that anti-realist relativism commits us to having to solve metaphysical problems shows that this position is not a completely general theory of



truth. But whether realism is defined by young satisfies the condition of generality is a question beyond the scope of this paper. Perhaps both theories will in the future be seen to be incorrect.

Department of Sociology  
The Flinders University  
of South Australia  
Bedford Park

JOSEPH WAYNE SMITH

SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 5042

#### NOTES

1. J. O. Young, "Relatively Speaking : The Coherence of Anti-Realist Relativism", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 16, No. 3, September 1986, pp. 503-509.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 508-509.
3. *Ibid*, p. 503.
4. *Ibid*, p. 503.
5. *Ibid*, p. 504.
6. *Ibid*, p. 505.
7. H. Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*, (Combridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981). Putnam's critique of metaphysical realism and defense of internal realism, has been criticised by many philosophers. This debate cannot be entered into here.



## THE PHILOSOPHY OF KALIDAS BHATTACHARYYA

Proceedings of a seminar organised by the Department of Philosophy, Rajasthan University, the book contains a critical appraisal of various aspects of the late **Kalidas Bhattacharyya's** philosophical thought, and includes his own final formulation of his philosophical position.

Edited by **Daya Krishna, A. M. Ghose and P. K. Srivastava**

The book includes contributions from **K. L. Sharma** (A Step Beyond K. C. Bhattacharyya), **Daya Krishna** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya and the Logic of Alternation), **S. K. Chattopadhyaya** (Professor Bhattacharyya's "Alternative Standpoints" of Philosophy), **K. Bagchi** (Subjective and Objective Attitudes as Alternatives: A study of Professor Kalidas Bhattacharyya's view of Knowledge-Object Unity), **N. K. Sharma** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya's Philosophy: Alternative Absolutes), **R. S. Bhatnagar** (Philosophy and Meta-Philosophy: Study of a Fundamental Dichotomy in Kalidas Bhattacharyya's Thought), **Mrs. Yogesh Gupta** (Pre-suppositions of Science and Philosophy: A Critical Study), **Mrinal Kanti Bhadra** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya's View of Freedom and Existentialist Thought), **Rajendra Prasad Pandey** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya on the Indian Concept of Man), **K. J. Shah** (Religion—Sophisticated and Unsophisticated), **J. N. Mohanty** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya as a Metaphysician).

1/8 Demy, Pages 239. Price Rs. 60/-

**Contact :** The Editor,

Indian Philosophical Quarterly,

Department of Philosophy,

Poona University, PUNE 411 007.



## THE AFRICAN PERSON : A CULTURAL DEFINITION

Man as the object of knowledge has remained a difficult quest practically since the dawn of philosophic reflection. "I can't as yet know myself" was a straightforward confession of Socrates on this question, following his injunction at Delphi. Philosophers ever since have seriously attempted various ways to attain self-knowledge, in fact, to face the most profound and perplexing, of all questions, namely, what is man?; what is his essence in real life?

Various and oftentimes conflicting answers have emerged. Indeed adequate self-knowledge has been sought in terms of some metaphysical essence, an inborn faculty or instinct. Hence man has variously been defined as a rational, political, religious, sexual, economic etc. animal. "Rationality", however, has enjoyed universal appeal over the years, hence, man is commonly defined as a rational animal, a thinking substance.

This definition has its limitations. For man not only thinks, he sings, makes tools, creates language, art, etc. as well. He lives not merely in a physical universe but certainly, as Ernst Cassirer put it, "in a symbolic universe; language, myth, art and religion are parts of this universe. They are the varied threads which weave the symbolic net, the tangled web of human experience".<sup>1</sup>

We thus gather that culture is important not just to social scientists but to philosophers as well and is to them an important path to self-knowledge, and to the question, what is man?

Received : 9-6-87



Culture is also the key to the understanding and definition of "the African" which is what this brief paper is all about.

\* "The African" the object of inquiry in this article is the black, African, mainly South of the Sahara unless the context shows otherwise.

That black Africa shows certain cultural unity is no longer in dispute among anthropologists. As a matter of fact, in his recent study of black Africa, Professor Jacques Maquet clearly shows how analogous existential experiences of life in an isolated and difficult environment have slowly produced a unified African world distinct from and comparable to the Western and Asian worlds. This unity according to him is not racial but cultural.<sup>2</sup> He gives the understanding of culture as "the totality of ways of living, working, and thinking and the totality of what results from these activities (institutions, artifacts, philosophies, etc.) as they are constituted in a given society".<sup>3</sup> It is also the meaning we give to culture in this article.

The point is that the African has taken the Delphic injunction, "Know Thyself" seriously particularly since the Second World War. He ardently wishes to become conscious of himself as a being-in-the-African world and to live with that consciousness. Consequently his culture, his being, and total environment have become very significant to him. The late Tom Mboya of Kenya (East Africa) expressed this collective aspiration of the African as "the desire to show the world that Africa has her own culture, her own social structures and her own mannerisms".<sup>4</sup> In his philosophy of negritude, the African in diaspora, Aimé Césaire, a West Indian from Martinique, likewise stated this new significance of cultural roots and values to the African, in plane terms :

We affirmed that we were Negroes and that we were proud of it, and that we thought that Africa was not some sort of



blank page in the history of humanity; in sum, we asserted that our negro heritage was worthy of respect... that its values were values that could still make an important contribution to the world<sup>5</sup>.

The point is that the African wishes to identify and be identified with his culture and, consequently, it is through culture that his personality is fully defined and, for Ernst Cassirer, the only possible mode to totally and truly understand man.

#### *The Essential African*

What is important here is to determine what makes the African who or what he is as a distinct cultural being in a distinct world. For what binds Africans together, what gives them a common soul, so to speak, arises from culture. This is what Professor Jacques Maquet calls "Africanity" which he briefly defines as, "the totality of cultural features common to the hundreds of the societies of sub-Saharan Africa".<sup>6</sup> He makes up a general list of the contents of this Africanity. "It is made", he says,

of elements belonging to various dimensions of culture : economic organization, family structure, political institutions, philosophical concepts, religions and rituals, graphic and plastic arts, the arts of movement, sound and speech.<sup>7</sup>

To Leopold Sedar Senghor, the late leader of Senegal, West Africa, what determines the soul of the African, his cultural essence, are the values of negritude. "Negritude", he says, "is the cultural heritage, the values, and above all, the *spirit* of Negro-African civilization". Its ontological dimensions, the affirmation of the African and his world are strongly stated in his more complete definition of negritude. It is,

the whole of the values of civilization, cultural, economic social, political which characterize the black peoples, more



exactly the Negro-African world. It is essentially instinctive reason, which pervades all these values, because it is reason of the impressions, reason that is "seized". It is expressed in the emotions, through an abandonment of self in an identification with the object; through the myth, I mean by images, archtypes of the collective soul, especially by the myth primordial accorded to those of the cosmos. In other terms, the sense of communion, the gift of imagination, the gift of rhythm. These are the traits of Negritude that we find like an indelible seal on all the works and activities of the black man.<sup>5</sup>

Thus in this definition, Senghor sees negritude as the sum total of the cultural roots of black self, those cultural traits which intuitively make the African perceive himself as an African and as belonging to that distinct race. These traits, Senghor holds, are found like an indelible seal on all the works and activities of the black man and, consequently, make him who or what he is.

As part of this cultural definition, Senghor, we have seen<sup>6</sup> makes mention of "sense of communion", "gift of imagination", "rhythm", etc. Other scholars identify the African with his artistic and symbolic forms, that is to say, his works of art, sculpture, paintings, masks, wood carving etc. It is in these areas particularly that the African manifests his creative genius. Speaking about African art for example, Paul Bohannon writes "Africa has an extensive good art. Its ineffable quality can be widely perceived and it has taken its place in museums and in the collections of many art lovers<sup>7</sup>.

The point is that in works of art, paintings, other signs and symbols no less than in music and dancing, the African reveals and identifies himself in his cultural personality. Likewise in cul-



tural arts and symbols, the African reveals his essential worldview as well as his ontological conceptions, his belief in and worship of ancestors, for example. The African believes in living beings beyond the grave, the so called "living dead" and portrays this belief and communications with his ancestors in signs, symbols, through sculpture (statues) and the rituals which usually accompany his many works of art.

Mention has also to be made of another aspect of cultural characteristic of the African, namely, his religious nature and praxis. For one thing, the horizon or worldview of the African is essentially religious. The African is "notoriously religious", Mbiti says. Other scholars regard him as "incurably religious". Religion permeates his total life, consequently there is nothing like a secular vision of world order. In this important way also, he is poles apart culturally from the western man.

Furthermore many socio-cultural practices also give distinct identity to African personality for man establishes himself not only through language, art, signs, and symbols but action as well. The first is the idea of family-hood. Extended family-hood characterises the mode of life of the African and shapes his personality and outlook in life. The African sees his nuclear family essentially as an extension of a broader family. Professor Maquet describes this broader family tree thus :

The African child has only to take a few steps in his village to visit several people who can substitute for his father, mother, brothers and sisters and they will treat him accordingly. Thus the child has many homes in his village and he is simultaneously giver and receiver of widespread attention.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed this extended family system is one "in which everybody is linked with all the other members, living or dead, through a



complex network of spiritual relationship into a kind of 'mystical body' <sup>11</sup>. Through cultural upbringing, therefore, the African is not individualistic. There is no question of rugged individualism in outlook and life-style so characteristic of the European or the American. The African is essentially man-in-community. It is the community which makes the individual, not the other way round, a point made by Professor John Mbiti in defining the "becoming" of an individual in African culture in this aphorism, "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am". <sup>12</sup>

Other than the socialist mentality which characterises the African way of life and which is rooted in the extended family-system practiced by the African, Maquet enumerates other cultural practices which altogether create a distinct African personality. These are "finding One's place among kin", "depending on lineage", "Being Rooted in Kinship", "Going back to the Ancestor" (ancestor worship), "Being in Harmony with Reality", "Making the lineage Continue" (love for children and family life), etc <sup>13</sup>. This is a brief portrait of the African in his cultural heritage, what gives him a distinctive personality.

#### *African Culture and Self-Realization : Concluding Reflections*

In this attempt to define "African personality" through the cultural traits of the African, we come back to the conclusion of Ernst Cassirer that man is indeed "a symbolic animal", not just a rational animal. He is a culture-builder. Emphasis is to be made that the African since independence has regarded self-realisation through building up a viable, dynamic culture as a serious project. "we have for too long been the victims of a foreign domination, Kwame Nkrumah once echoed. "For too long we have had no say in the management of our own affairs or in deciding our own destinies". <sup>14</sup>



The African wishes now to build a new image, a personality altogether different from the 'colonial one'. He wants to establish himself as the master of his world and architect of his destiny, which amounts to a re-establishment of self in a self-determined, self-directed, self-controlled continent. He realises he can only accomplish this goal through his culture, hence the impatient assertion of President Sekou Toure of Guinea is easily understandable :

We insist for our part on the cultural rehabilitation of African and it is with this in mind, that for us, financial backing, however burden it may be, remains a means at the service of an eternal cause, that of the affirmation of Africa's dignity.<sup>15</sup>

"We are doing everything to revive our culture", Nkrumah assured the National Assembly in Accra in 1965. The point is that culture-building is not just a mere theoretical affirmation on the part of the African. It has remained with him since independence a top practical pursuit. The various festivals of arts and culture held in many African countries bear this out as well as the pursuit of indigenous technology, indigenous political systems as *Ujamaa* Experiment in Tanzania initiated by that nation's former leader, Julius K. Nyerere<sup>16</sup>, the promotion of indigenous music, paintings, religion, fashion, education for self-reliance, etc. All these efforts of cultural revival and survival prove the point Aimé Césaire made earlier on, namely that "Africa (is) not some sort of blank page in the history of humanity" and (can) still make an important contribution to the world". But



above all, they point to the fact that the African has his own distinct, hence identifiable cultural personality.

Department of Philosophy  
University of Nigeria  
Nsukka  
NIGERIA.

CHUKWUDUM B. OKOLO

#### NOTES

1. Ernst Cassirer *An Essay On Man* ( New York : Bantain Books, 1970 ), p. 27.
2. Jacques Maquet : *Africanity The Cultural Unity of Black Africa* tr. Joan K. Rayfield ( New York : Oxford University Press, 1973 ), p. 4.
3. *Ibid.* pp. 8-9.
4. Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After* ( London : Andre Deutsch, 1963 ), p. 227.
5. Aime Cesaire, *Discourse On Colonialism* tr. Joan Pinkham, New York : Monthly Review Press, 1972, p. 76.
6. Jecques Macquet, *Op. Cit.*, p. 64.
7. *Ibid.*
8. L. S. Senghor, "Discourse pronounce a l' universitate d' Oxford" 26 October, 1961 quoted by Prof. E. A. Ruch and Dr. K. C. Anyanwu, *African Philosophy...* ( Rome : Catholic Book Agency, 1981 ), p. 206.
9. Paul Bohannen *Africa and Africans* ( New York : Natural History Press, 1964 ), p. 140.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
11. Prof. E. A. Ruch and Dr. K. C. Anyanwu, *African Philosophy, An Introduction to the Main Philosophical Trends in Contemporary Africa* ( Roma : Catholic Book Agency, 1981 ), p. 328.
12. John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy* ( Heinemann, 1969 ), p. 108
13. Jacques Maquet, "The contents of Africanity", *Op. Cit.*, pp. 54-101.
14. Kwame Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, quoted by Gideon Cyrus M. Mutiso and S. W. Rohio ( eds. ) *Readings in African Political Thought* ( London : Heinemann, 1975 ), p. 61.
15. Sekou Toure, "Negritude Versus Pan-Africanism" *New Horizon* ( March-April, 1976 ). p. 13.
16. See Julius K. Nyerere *Ujamaa : Essays on Socialism* ( New York : Oxford University Press, 1968 ).



## CAN BERKELEY BE CALLED AN IMAGIST?

Berkeley has recently been described as an imagist.<sup>1</sup> Commentators so qualify him perhaps because of his account of thinking which is closely connected with his theory of universals. An imagist holds that mental images are the basic symbols which we use in our thinking. All other symbols, e. g., words in particular, are secondary or derivative. Thus the imagist does not deny that words have meaning, but he insists that they have it only indirectly, as substitutes for images. He argues that these substitutes are necessary because words can be manipulated much more quickly and easily than images can be. Thus words, according to this theory, are used in an *uncashed* manner which is precisely their function and unless our words are cashable by means of images we could not think at all. The imagist, therefore, emphasizes on the aspect of image thinking only and underestimates value and significance of verbal thinking.<sup>2</sup> Above all, he thinks that the *generic images* will play the role of universals.

My purpose in the context of the present paper is to show that Berkeley cannot be called an imagist and that what we attribute to him as imagism is, in fact, nothing but conceptualism blended with objective resemblance. The theory of objective resemblance is, in the ultimate analysis, a mixture of this with an Aristotelian theory of real universals in things as common characters.

Received : 24-8-87



## I

There is no gainsaying that Berkeley has been called as an imagist primarily because of his conflicting philosophical positions and his utter obsession of rejecting abstract ideas of Locke. But the fundamental point is whether he is consistently an imagist. His literature, as we are about to consider, does not presumably project him to be so.

Berkeley writes : " Now if we will annex a meaning to our words, and speak only of what we can conceive, I believe we shall acknowledge, that an idea becomes general, by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort " <sup>3</sup> It may be observed that if Berkeley is designated as an imagist, then he ought to mean by 'idea' in this context an image, or as he would put it, 'an idea of imagination'. But there are reasons to doubt whether he actually intends to use 'idea' here to mean image. A further reflection will help us to fortify position. " To make this plain by an example, suppose a geometrician is demonstrating the method, of cutting a line in two equal parts. He draws, for instance, a black line of an inch in length, this which in itself is a particular line... represents all particular lines what-soever. " <sup>4</sup> So it is palpable that Berkeley understands by an 'idea' mainly an idea of sense, in this case a diagram, a sketch of a line.

The above illustrations seem to exonerate Berkeley from the charge of being an imagist. The withdrawal of this title is significant at least in respect of liberating him from one of the charges often levelled against the imagist, namely, that of failing to admit other primary symbols besides images. For we have pointed out that Berkeley, in fact, refers to thinking with the help of sensible diagrams. However, we need to mention that although Berkeley cannot be called an imagist, he need not be held to deny our ability to think with the help of images. Rather,



he could allow that an imaged triangle and a triangle drawn on paper perform the same directive function in our thinking.

We have pointed out that the imagist unduly depreciates the importance and significance of verbal thinking. Even recognizing the possibility of this sort of thinking, he feels at home to think in terms of images. Now it may be held that Berkeley certainly says some hard things about language. But he also remarks that 'words are of excellent use'. It then appears that in so far as Berkeley attacks language it is only on a basis of profit and loss. Language has, no doubt, much to commend it, but it has been so abused that it is better to dispense with it in so far as we can. Indeed, Berkeley's consideration here engenders pernicious error, because it is weighted mainly by his desire to avert the vicious regress of language—abstraction—matter. Nevertheless, he seems to be certainly aware of the advantages of verbal thinking. However, we may admit that he decides simply wrongly that these advantages are brought at too high a price.

We have further noted that an imagist supposes that the *generic image* will play the role of universals. But what is a *generic image*? It has often been compared to Galton's 'composite photograph.' It emphasizes on the resemblances and cancels out the differences, between the faces of all the members of a family, say, of the Churchill family, when photographed on the same plate. The picture has what may be called a *typical resemblance* between the family faces of the Churchill family. However, it is different from an *exact copy image*, e.g., a dog-image. The imagist claims that in respect of thinking what we use are not the exact-copy images but generic ones. The exact-copy image has a *typical resemblance* to all the members of a class but an *exact resemblance* to none. For that reason it is justly required to serve as a symbol for a class. Thus the imagist contends that it is generic images, not exact-copy ones, which



are used in image thinking: and it is by generic images that words are cashed in absence.

But this account of the generic images is open to serious objections. The moderate realists may react to it by arguing that the generic image, however vague and impressionistic it may be, is still a particular image. It may be said that, on broader grounds, a further count may be added. Besides, though the generic images, as opposed to exact-copy ones, are often used in thinking, yet they do not serve our purpose for all classes. The workability of the generic images depends on the nature and degree of unlikeness which exists between the sub-classes under it. Galton's generic images will work for thinking of crocodiles, which do not very much differ from each other, and perhaps they will just suffice for thinking about dogs which differ a great deal from each other. But they will not suffice for triangles—the class which gives Locke and Berkeley so much trouble. The analogy of a composite photograph does not seem to work here. We may suppose, for instance, that there are fifteen triangles drawn on paper—five equilaterals, five isosceles and five scalene. They all have different areas—the isosceles one differ from each other in sizes of their triangles, so do the scalene ones. Now, if we photograph them on the same plate the result will not be any kind of picture but just a mess—a mere blur. It cannot be held that the features they have in common, viz., three sides, three angles, etc., will be emphasized cancelling out the other in which they differ. For we do not conceive what a picture can be like in which three sidedness is emphasized but no sides are visible. Again, for the class of colour it is difficult to find a Galtonian generic image. And Berkeley does not fail to ask, what would be the colour of the abstract man? Obviously, the colour can be neither black, nor white, nor tawny; and a mixture of these colours also can hardly do. However, there are other



properties which lend themselves less easily than colour to generic imagery. Hence it is clear that the generic images would have serious limitations if they are allowed to perform the role of universals. It may further be added that if imagism does imply a generic image account of universals, we have here also other cogent argument for considering it important that Berkeley should not be called an imagist.<sup>6</sup> The title rather is a misnomer for him.

## II

Now the question arises : If Berkeley is not an imagist, what is he ? He cannot obviously be called a realist because he pronounces that general words stand not for general things but for particulars. Also, he cannot apparently be called a conceptualist, for he denies that general words stand for abstract general ideas. But the question crops up whether Berkeley really succeeds in eliminating abstract ideas altogether. We shall now consider the question by examining Berkeley's account of 'sortal' knowledge and his polemic against the notion of abstract ideas.

Berkeley, like Locke, means by the 'sorts' primarily the natural 'sorts'. Things in nature are grouped in sorts or they appear to be so grouped. The problem now concerns us is whether the 'sorts', for Berkeley, are objective existences, or, in other words, whether there are natural classes.

In the *Commonplace Book* Berkeley is not very much explicit on the question of 'sorts'. In an early note he denies that the 'sorts' are the work of the mind and only in the mind; he says that 'certainly genera and species are not abstract general ideas'. But later he connects the problem of 'sorts' with that of abstraction; that is genera and species are soon grouped along with abstract general ideas. Hence no clear answer emerges from the *Commonplace Book* if the 'sorts' and species are mere figments of the mind.



In the *Draft*, identifying genera and species with abstract general ideas, Berkeley admits, "By abstract ideas, genera, species, universal notions all which amount to the same thing."<sup>7</sup> This, however, does not clearly show that the 'sorts' are also such abstract general ideas. But he further says, "This abstract, general idea, thus framed the mind gives a general name and lays it up and uses it as a standard whereby to judge what particulars are and what are not to be accounted of that sort; those only which contain every part of the general idea having a right to be admitted into that sort and called by that name."<sup>8</sup> This passage, of course, indicates that the name of the general abstract idea is also the name of the sort. But it does not clarify whether they are identical, or whether they should be distinguished, in the language of extension and intension, by saying that the sort is the extension and the abstract idea, the intension. Hence the passage badly needs further clarification—which Berkeley does not furnish, instead when he comes to re-read it later he erases it.

Again, in the *Draft*, Berkeley speaks of the 'sorts' while explaining what he means by a general word. He holds that a general word is a sign not of an abstract idea, but of 'a great number of particular ideas, between which there is some likeness, and which are said to be of the some sort'. At this point he feels the necessity of explaining what he means by a 'sort'. And, in effect, he says, "But these sorts are not determined and set out by Nature, as was thought by most philosophers. Nor yet are they limited by any precise, abstract ideas settled in the mind, with the general name annexed to them as is the opinion of the author of the Essay."<sup>9</sup> Thus, although Berkeley endeavours to reject the 'realist' and the 'conceptualist' accounts of the 'sorts', he surprisingly does not put any positive account in their place.



Rather on an after-thought Berkeley discerns the absence of any positive view and deletes it.

Berkeley finds the problem of 'sorts' too difficult to settle. Aaron rightly remarks that the *Draft* discussion in particular reveals Berkeley's failure to solve the problem of 'sorts' and explains the silence of published *Introduction*.<sup>10</sup> He turns his attention from 'sorts' to 'singling'. But can "singling" be carried out in any way *without* solving the problem of 'sorts'? The use of general words, Berkeley reiterates, involves abstraction which is a process wherein the mind "observing that the individuals of each kind agree in some things, and differ in others, takes out and singles from the rest, that which is common to all."<sup>11</sup> The problem of 'sorts' is, of course, bound up with this notion of something 'common to all'. Hence Aaron concludes, "the charge can be made against Berkeley that in the *Introduction* he turned his back upon the main problem, that of the status and nature of what he called the 'sorts'. In the *Common-place Book* and *Draft* he had touched on the problem but found it too difficult. Yet the argument of the *Introduction* is incomplete without a discussion of this matter and lacks a foundation."<sup>12</sup>

In the *Introduction* Berkeley lays stress on what he considers to be the psychological errors in Locke's theory of abstraction – the errors which appear to him as the 'killing blow'. We can frame abstract idea of, say, man by taking the abstracted common qualities observed in man. Berkeley proposes to demolish this theory of abstraction. Instead of concentrating on the common element – the univesal – Berkeley concentrates on the 'singling'. We may suppose that if the flaws of the account of 'singling' are evinced, the theory of abstraction would then be equally rebutted. Hence the questions which Berkeley tries to



answer in his polemic are : Is 'singling' psychologically justifiable? Can the common element, whatever may be its nature, be abstracted? He remarks to argue : "... the idea of man that I frame to my self, must be either of a white, or a black, or a tawny, a straight, or a crooked, a tall, or a low, or a middle-sized man. I cannot by any effort of thought conceive the abstract idea above described"<sup>13</sup>. Thus Berkeley emphasizes that the 'singling' or 'mental separation' which is alleged to give an abstract idea is psychologically impossible. To think of abstract general idea is to think some sort of self contradiction. This is how Berkeley ventures to subvert the edifice of abstract idea with the rejection of 'singling out' certain common quality from a cluster of qualities.

It is now occasion to examine the validity of the above psychological criticism. In fact, it seems quite safe to say that we cannot *imagine* a man who has some colour but no particular colour. But this does not justify the view that to *think* of man is always to *imagine* a man of a particular colour or height or anything else of the kind. The fact that we cannot imagine a particular man who is neither white, nor black, nor tawny, does not at all prove that we cannot speak of 'man' meaning white, black and tawny men at one and the same time. Thus Berkeley's criticism applies to imagining only, and not to conceiving. And he appears to make confusion between the two.

Again, is Berkeley's psychological analysis correct? We may ask, cannot we think of the rectangularity of the paper ignoring its brownness, when a rectangular piece of brown paper is before us? Certainly, we can and do. However, when we first think of the rectangularity, the other qualities may also come to mind and when we try to recall *this* rectangularity, we perhaps may not keep them aside altogether. They may remain vaguely in the back-ground. Nevertheless, we can certainly go on talking signi-



significantly of rectangularity as such *without* talking of other qualities. This is not a question whether we have the ability to conceive or think about one concept independently of another, but it is a question whether the instantiations of the concepts can exist without the 'properties' in question. And the answer, as a matter of fact, seems to be in the affirmative. Hence Berkeley's psychological analysis does not seem to be correct.

Over and above, what Berkeley says about 'singling' seems doubtful psychologically, for he himself concludes by admitting that one can single out, say, *triangularity*. In the *Introduction* he himself apprehends the necessity of singling and in the *Errata* to the first edition he admits that 'singling' or 'mental separation' is possible in some cases—that one can after all consider some particular qualities separated from another. Unfortunately, he gives no instance of such qualities. But if he is thinking of the colour, extension and motion of an object, as he seems to be doing, then certainly the mind can abstract. Surely the mind can abstract, for example, the shape from the colour and movement, and concentrate on it alone.

In the *Draft* Berkeley holds that universality consists 'in the relation it bears to the particulars signified or represented by it'. He illustrates this by saying that when we prove something of *triangle*, we do have a universal idea of triangle 'in view' though not an abstract general idea. And the universality of this particular idea lies in its capacity to represent other particular triangle, yet it holds of any other. It can hold of any other because, Berkeley says, the differentiating features of this triangle are not 'concerned in the demonstration' — 'there is not the least mention made of them in the proof of the other proposition' <sup>14</sup>. Hence what is true of this triangle is true of all.

It appears that Berkeley is now affirming that, though we make use of a particular triangle, our real object is after all not that



particular triangle but rather that which is common to all triangles including that one. He thus seems to be aware of 'triangle in general'. However, he does not explain what exactly he means by it, and simply to say that it is a particular triangle having a representative capacity is not to explain its nature. But it is significant to note that Berkeley admits that a man may abstract so for he considers a figure merely as triangular without attending to the particular qualities of the angles or relations of the sides. And though he does not admit this to be a proof that thus 'he can frame an abstract general inconsistent idea of a triangle', we may take, as Aaron suggests<sup>15</sup>, the risk of granting this point. What is really significant is that, Berkeley now admits, we *can* abstract the triangularity. That is, we can abstract or 'single out', looking at the shaped coloured patches before us, the shape triangle and concentrate on it, ignoring the other distinctive features of the patches. We can direct our attention on the triangularity of certain of the patches and think about it as such. This is the abstract idea of *triangularity*. All the particular triangles share this triangularity and thus they make up one 'sort'.

Thus we see that Berkeley's polemic against abstract ideas ends with the admission of the universal abstract idea, *triangularity*. But we must note that while it is one thing to acknowledge the existence of abstract general ideas, it is another to give an account of them. And, in fact, we find no satisfactory account of these ideas in Berkeley.

Now, if Berkeley is not successful in eliminating the abstract general ideas for which the general words are said to stand, then can't he be called a conceptualist? Once again we may consider Berkeley's view that the image of a particular triangle is made to represent all triangles, i.e., all figures of the sort. But what is meant by 'the same sort'? To know the 'sort', we



must have a concept before our mind of what it is to be a triangle. And this concept must not be an image. Hence an image can be used, as Berkeley claims, in its representative capacity only if we already know what a 'sort' is. But surely to know what a 'sort' is involves having a concept of a common property. Hence we are back with conceptualism.<sup>16</sup> We have argued that Berkeley's polemic against abstract ideas ends with the acknowledgement of the abstract general idea that is the concept of *triangularity*. To have the concept of triangularity is to have in mind the defining characteristics of triangles. And having this concept which is abstract is not the same as having an image which is particular. We have argued above that having a concept does not involve having any image and, in fact, we do have concepts with no accompanying imagery. Thus there are far more than images in our minds when we use general words. There are concepts over and above any images that we may have — concepts for which general words stand. Hence it appears that Berkeley must slip into conceptualism if he is to work out a satisfactory account for the meaning of general words. Certainly, Locke's theory of abstraction and generality does not deserve Berkeley's mockery.

### III

But conceptualism cannot be held in a pure form, i.e., pure conceptualism is implausible. For it confines thinking to objects which are 'in the mind' and are subjective. Such conceptualism must lead to scepticism. Whatever account we give of concepts or general ideas, if we bring objects in relation to them, this cannot be the whole explanation and justification of our applying the same general term to these objects. But this would be to say that classification is totally arbitrary. So conceptualism is, never held in pure form, always associated with some kind of resemblance theory. As with Locke's theory of conceptualism



we find him admitting that there are multitude of objective resemblances between things and classification of things is made by paying selective attention to some of these natural and objective resemblances and ignoring others.<sup>17</sup>

Now if we are right in holding that in Berkeley we are back again with conceptualism, then it too must be held in association with a resemblance theory. And it is not impossible to attribute such a theory even to Berkeley, as to Locke. However, it must be granted that Berkeley says little about resemblance, the relation which we consider to be fundamental in our account. But in his criticism of abstraction he does show his awareness of the relation. It is evident from his reiteration that : "the mind having observed that Peter, James, and John, resemble each other, in certain common agreements of shape and other qualities, ...".<sup>18</sup> It is resemblance that provides the basis for the 'sorts'. And no doubt Berkeley considers the fact of resemblance so obvious that it does not require to be stressed.

However, the theory of resemblance cannot suffice without depending on the Aristotelian notion of the 'thing-having-property' form. For when the resemblance theory speaks of one thing's being like another, it makes the fundamental fact a 'relational' one. This fact presupposes the existence of at least two things. But what is important is to note that surely just one thing has characteristics or properties by itself and logically it would have those properties whether there were any other things or not. A thing is said to be of this, that and other sort in respect of those intrinsic properties, whether or not there are other things to form these 'sorts' with it. Now if each of two things has thus a certain property by itself, then it is a logical consequence that they will resemble each other in that respect. In other words, it is only as a logical consequence of each one's having a certain feature on its own that two things can have the



relation of resemblance in a certain respect. 'Each thing's having qualities on its own' is indeed the fundamental reality to which the Aristotelian view draws our attention. Mackie thus says : " For every case of thing's having a certain quality or intrinsic property, we can think of possible worlds in which this situation survives without any corresponding relations of resemblance, but we *cannot think* of possible worlds in which a relation of resemblance survives *without* any corresponding situations of the thing-having-property form .. Any conceivable reductive analysis of this fundamental reality will fail through circularity : we shall have to *postulate* items of this thing-intrinsically-of-a-certain-sort form among the data of any explanation we attempt to give ".<sup>19</sup>

Berkeley, therefore, cannot be called an imagist; rather in him we again come back to conceptualism. And Berkeley's conceptualism is a mixture of this with resemblance theory which, in turn, depends on the Aristotelian doctrine of real universals in things as common characters.

Department of Philosophy  
Deshabandhu Mahavidyalaya  
CHITTARANJAN-713 331  
Burdwan (W. B.)

A. KASEM

#### NOTES

1. H. H. Price, *Thinking and Experience*, 2nd Edn. (London : Hutchinson & Co., 1962 ), pp. 234, 239-40, 297, 306.
2. *Ibid* , p. 239.
3. G. Berkeley, *The Principles of Human Knowledge*, Introduction, in *The Works of George Berkeley*, eds. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop ( London : Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1949 ), Sect. 12, pp. 31-32.



4. *Ibid.*, sect. 12, p. 32.
5. H. H. Price, *op. cit.*, p. 284.
6. E. J. Furlong, "Abstract Ideas and Images", in *Berkeley and Modern Problems*, The Symposia read at the joint session of the *Aristotelian Society* and the *Mind Association* at Dublin (London : Harrison and sons, 1953), p. 133.
7. G. Berkeley, *First Draft of the Introduction to the Principles*, in *The Works of George Berkeley*, eds. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jossop, *op. cit.*, sect. 7, p. 123.
8. *Ibid.*, sect. 7, p. 123.
9. *Ibid.*, sect. 12, p. 128.
10. R. I. Aaron, *The Theory of Universals*, 2nd edn. (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 50-51. Please see Aaron for details, pp. 50-55.
11. G. Berkeley, *First Draft of the Introduction to the Principles op. cit.*, sect. 7, p. 123.
12. R. I. Aaron, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
13. G. Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Introduction *op. cit.*, sect. 10, p. 29.
14. G. Berkeley, *First Draft of the Introduction to the Principles*, *op. cit.*, sect. 16, p. 132.
15. R. I. Aaron. *op. cit.*, p. 62.
16. Cf. J. Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* (New Delhi : Allied Publishers, 1977), p. 362.
17. J. L. Mackie, *Problems from Locke* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 109-110.
18. G. Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Introduction, *op. cit.*, sect. 9, p. 28.
19. J. L. Mackie, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-37. Italics mine.

Acknowledgement :

I acknowledge my debts to Professor Ernest LePore, University of Rutgers, New Jersey, for his valuable comments, through personal correspondence, on an earlier draft of this paper.



January 1989

## PSYCHIATRIC ETHICS : ROLE OF PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

### *Introduction*

Philosophy as such is an obscure topic for most. And philosophers help no less in making it more obscure by their approach. This is probably one of the reasons philosophical enquiry is avoided by most professionals as well as professional journals, not only in India<sup>1</sup> but also on the European continent.<sup>2</sup> This is also the reason why it is promptly given up after a brief honeymoon by others who may otherwise profess such a bent of mind. We shall not here try to increase the confusion of either. The pluralistic thrust of the American set-up has of course encouraged discussion of ethical issues (Chavez 1964; West 1968; Braceland 1969; Halleck 1974b; Michels 1976; Redlich & Mollica 1976; Chodoff 1976; Monahan 1977; Somers 1977; Spiegel 1978; Bazelon 1978; Towery and Sharfstein 1978; Moore 1978; Karasu 1980)<sup>3</sup> but that has not necessarily included resolute enquiries into its philosophical fundamentals. Traditionally the philosopher has been used to a form of language so abstruse as to intimidate even the most eager psychiatrist (Bloch and Chodoff 1984a). Of course some philosophers have made efforts to overcome this by offering practical and concrete solutions, of which Hare (1952, 1981, 1984), Warnock (1978) and Singer (1978) are notable examples. In an effort to further this, let us temper the philosopher's absolutism with the psychiatrist's utilitarianism<sup>4</sup>. We believe such a synthesis can be of benefit especially in a branch like psychiatric ethics, where

Received : 30-9 88



absolute concepts taken originally from philosophy have to be made applicable to the exigencies of professional practice. Moreover, scientific knowledge by itself does not confer ethical sensitivity and 'generalization of expertise' (Veatch 1973) from scientific to moral, when exposed, is an important source of anti-professionalism (Michels 1981). At the same time when moral conflicts arise, no one-level account can solve the problem; if conflicts arise at one level, they cannot be resolved without ascending to a higher level (Hare 1984). At the intuitive level of thinking, the absolutist stance is appropriate but it no longer remains sufficient when conflicts arise between them and/or with other circumstances. Then the critical level of thinking of the utilitarians alone can suffice. We select thereby the principles to be used at the intuitive level and adjudicate between them in cases where they conflict (Hare 1984; also Hare 1981). However, both intuition and critical thinking cannot be allowed to negatively influence each other and part of our energies have to be legitimately utilized in such prevention. A true utilitarian, therefore, is not one who simply maximises utility. He is one who acts for the greatest good of those whose welfare he is charged with; and 'when faced with a moral decision he continues to act in whichever way is best for the interests of those affected' (Hare 1984).

Philosophical exploration is necessary also because in the field of ethical conduct, psychiatrists must be able to do more than convey injunctions against fraudulent or exploitative actions or merely supply a code of professional etiquette (Murry 1979). A grounding in a theory of values is also required (Chodoff 1984), for which tracing of philosophical credentials becomes obligatory.

### *Code, Regulation*

We shall start by asking and trying to answer certain basic questions. In this manner, we may be able to scrutinize some of



our presuppositions, evaluate them, sift the proper from the improper, and lay down certain criteria for sound reasoning.

What is ethics, after all ? It is the science of conduct, whether good or bad, of morals, whether moral or immoral, of propriety, whether proper or improper. If there is to be a code of ethics, it presupposes both the need and the ability to regulate conduct according to morality principles irrefutable as to their propriety. A code of psychiatric ethics means there is both the need to regulate such conduct of the psychiatric establishment<sup>5</sup>, and an acknowledgement that the bodies entrusted therewith have the ability to do so. When there is a question of ability, both competence and volition come into play. The regulating body, therefore, must be competent to do what it professes to and should have the will to carry it out. Here, conduct, which involves volition and action, comes into the picture. A code of ethical conduct must therefore regulate the *will*<sup>6</sup> to action and guide the *purposiveness* of that action. It must, moreover, be intimately related to action itself, to the *activity* of the establishment which is supposed to profess it.

Is there a need to regulate the establishment's activity ? To this the consensus answer would be yes, although some die-hards may disapprove because they intrinsically fear outside interference in their affairs as they fear any accountability; accountability and scrutiny become synonymous with prosecution in their minds which arouses guilt and anxiety and a consequent avoidance behaviour that can be aggressively propelled. Is there a will to bring about such a regulation ? The answer to this again is atleast a partial yes. Most psychiatrists in their individual capacity do so, or atleast expect themselves to do so, and errors of omission, not necessarily born of deceit, are more common here than those of commission. Others who do not have such a will are the black-sheep whose presence is inevitable in any set up;



the most that can be done is minimize their importance and expose their nefarious influence. For both these, a watch-dog type of set-up is needed, comprising of members of the establishment all-right, but also those of other social welfare bodies, whether the establishment wills it or not. The latter's presence is rendered inevitable precisely because the establishment's objectivity is likely to be jeopardized when it has to pass judgements over faults of its own members. Whilst some errors can be almost unconsciously condoned, others may be highlighted just to side-track from certain issues or, worse, malign certain sections. Patient rights' advocates in social welfare organisations cannot be kept at bay for long in such a set up. This of course is in spite of howsoever much the establishment wishes to shoo them away. Growing scepticism about the sanctity of science, medicine and psychiatry means that these fields are no longer above rebuke or exempt from active moral review by their recipients, professional peers and others outside of their practice (Karasu 1980). Professional organizations and societies, psychiatry included, must invite this participation in professional decisions (Michels 1981). Appropriate role for non-professionals in professional decision making has already begun in ethics review boards, licensure groups and selection committee, and will probably extend further.

Is there a need to guide the purposiveness of the establishment's action? Most of us would again agree, although how this is to be done would be no small hurdle to cross. Again, when we talk of the need to guide activity so that it becomes purposeful, we must presume that there is the possibility that this activity can be purposeful as also that it can stray from this purpose. Now, again, in keeping an activity purposeful, interested parties must automatically get involved, and where there is also a question of prevention from straying, the role of watch-



dog agencies that profess to prevent such an eventuality cannot but be envisioned. A code is supposed to regulate activity to make it purposeful and as long as this activity does not become censure-free, regulating bodies must define and redefine priorities and principles to make the establishment's activity as less malevolent and as morally sound as possible.

Coming now to the question of activity, it presupposes at least two agencies : the actor and the one acted upon. The code thus must be a guideline to the activities of the establishment as it comes in contact with the patient population on which it has to act. We know, however, it is not only these two agencies that are involved. Probably in a secondary manner at present, and we may have occasion to dispute this later, the involvement cannot be circumscribed thus. Of course one would be justified in feeling better off if it remained so, but that is another matter—for one thing, it is no longer practical, for another, it itself is fraught with chances of exploitation, by both the agencies involved.

To obviate the emergence of exploitation or improper implementation, certain other agencies must need enter the picture. One of them is the judiciary, with the judges, the lawyers and even the police—force playing a role. The other is legislative bodies who consider it their duty to legislate on matters of law pertaining to professional transactions. (Of course often this duty is only a subterfuge for rights, but that is another matter). Also, socio-humanitarian activists in the community, as well as others with not so honest intentions, consider it their duty to make their presence felt. 'Critics maintain that in the interest of justice to the public it is essential that non-professional representatives also take part in deliberations about the derelictions and misdeeds of psychiatrists' (Chodoff 1984).



A code of ethics must, therefore, attempt to incorporate the diverse opinion of such groups. What we mean thereby is not necessarily accept their views. Rather it means minimize the chances of friction between the establishment's conduct and the over-seeing attitude of these agencies. In other words, to accept their presence, if not all their views. A code should therefore try to incorporate such barriers that safeguard the profession against unnecessary conflicts with such groups. It must also try to prevent transgressions by members likely to create conflict with its clientele and their champions. It attempts to lay down, in the least complicated manner possible, what a reasonably conscientious professional should attempt, and assiduously guard against.

### *Two Points*

Conscientiousness in a professional must be considered a virtue. But by itself it leads to difficulties. If coupled with aggressivity, for example, it may lead to heroic measures in treatment which no doubt help many patients but can equally well arouse resentment and animosity in any number of others. It can also lead to disenchantment and guilt feelings because the best of intentions are either not implementable or when implemented arouse a negative response from the client's side; which again brings home the fact that the best of intentions need not necessarily beget the best of results, even if coupled with competence and professional expertise. Who does not know of the honest psychiatrist who makes a proper diagnosis and carries out the best treatment possible only to be hauled before the court of law for negligence or improper treatment? Or to be involved in a tacit word by mouth campaign about his very capabilities? Or worse still, arouse doubts in himself about his own capacities, with reduction in his realistic vigour and zest, imperceptibly resulting in an passive acquiescence in the client's paranoia. Do we also



not know that in a case where there is no informed consent, the fact that the treatment was technically well performed and effected a complete cure is immaterial (Slovenko 1985, Kaplan and Sadock 1985)? Again, it is one malpractice claim under which the requirement of expert testimony can be avoided (Slovenko 1985). Who does not know how often the inability to get informed consent is just a means to avoid coming to decisions likely to be painful to implement or sustain later, besides involving legal hassles as an ever-hanging democles' sword?

The points that come across glaringly to even a casual observer are two. Firstly, involvement of other agencies in the profession's code of conduct has come to stay. We cannot wish it away. We cannot also minimize its influence by either hurt resignation or aggressive rebuttal. Refer, for example, to statements like, 'our intentions were and still are, good in this area and that, given the wherewithall, we have a lot to offer. Society's intentions, however, have been proven to be questionable and they have not given us what we need', (Rappeport 1978)<sup>7</sup>. Michels (1981) advocates that the profession's attitude toward this trend itself be professional, an eminently suitable suggestion. If anything this influence is bound to increase, precisely because the psychiatric establishment works less with the body more with the mind. That other medical professionals also face ethical dilemmas is as clear as the fact that the psychiatrist's difficulties are to an extent unique because of the peculiar nature of the problems he has to come to grips with. The psychiatrist is a rather special variety of physician (Chodoff 1981). It is the mind with which he works, on which he attempts modification, over which the ideals of proper, right and good are super-imposed. He is thus in that very much greater a capacity to both influence the other and to be influenced by him, for good or for evil. There-



fore, we must believe that the code will come under increasing scrutiny of its clients, social activists and the law. Forces within the establishment that seek to question its credentials (Szasz 1963, 1970, 1974) will appear as critical of its capacities as members of the judiciary who pass strictures on the uncertainties of psychiatric diagnoses and therapy, and appear unconvinced even of reality of psychiatric disorders. For example, some Justices in the United States appear firmly convinced that psychiatry is akin to charlatanry and psychiatric diagnoses is no more accurate than palm-reading (Appelbaum 1984). Justice White's majority opinion compared mental hospitals unfavourably with prisons (*Vitek v Jones* 1980). Justice Stewart considered milieu therapy an euphemism for confinement in the milieu of a mental hospital (*O'Connor v Donaldson* 1975). Compare this with Szasz and the other anti-establishment writings that seek to establish mental illness itself as a myth and even identify involuntary hospitalization with slavery (Szasz 1978). This will be more so as long as psychiatrists presume to decide questions for courts by incorporating into their medical judgements factors beyond their medical expertise (Bazelon 1978). They must then face up to the irksome cross-examination of their expertise in courts and elsewhere. They will also have to accept that a court does not feel bound by the opinion of even those psychiatric experts it itself appoints (Rappeport 1978). The trial of John W. Hinckley Jr., the would be assassin of U. S. President Ronald Reagan, by a District of Columbia jury in 1982 also turned out to be a trial of law and psychiatry. The psychiatrists, and the law allowing their testimony, were made culprits for the unpopular verdict of not guilty by reason of insanity: 'The psychiatrists spun sticky webs of pseudo scientific jargon, and in those webs the concept of justice, like a moth, fluttered feebly and was trapped' (opinion quoted by Slovenko 1985).



And yet, somewhere along the line, we must also sound a word of caution. This is the second point. Influence of other agencies, especially law, on the establishment does not amount to transformation of its ethical identity to become one mainly influenced by them. Let us see what we mean thereby. Law, for example, plays an important part in the establishment's code of conduct, especially in its application and in arbitration over disputes. How important this is can be gauged from any worthwhile book on psychiatric ethics for it concentrates mainly on law and legality as applicable to the establishment. This is understandable since the professional has to apply ethical principles in day-to-day practice and must concern himself with practicality more than its conceptual principles; and in an adversarial situation an arbiter cannot but step in, which is what the judicial process essentially is. It is part of professional expertise, then, to be conversant with legal intricacies. And yet we know the impropriety of equating legality with propriety. Ethics is not to be equated with legality, or with legal rights, sanctions and privileges. Or with formulating the means of saving one's skin. It then becomes little more than a trade union, defending the parochial interests of its members against the claims of their employers, in this case the public, while the latter inevitably organize in an adversarial relation to the profession (Michels 1981). Ethics essentially is morality in practice. And anyone who tries to excuse himself, for whatever reasons, pragmatic or for survival, by means of tenuous logic or cover of legality cannot but accuse himself in the bargain. *Qui s'excuse s'accuse*. For example, there can be a tendency, especially amongst the medical profession so mooted in professionalism and worried about indemnity claims, to consider obtaining valid consent in various forms (by valid we do not mean those that are morally proper but those that stand in a court of law – and it is unfortunately necessary to

...7



make this differentiation) as the major, if not only, concern of ethics in medical research or practice. Legality thus gets confused with proper or improper conduct. Whilst no doubt ethics is concerned with law and legislation (as it is concerned with every issue in which conduct can possibly be involved) it is not to be considered synonymous with the legality of conduct, or be restricted within this sphere. It can of course be so at times because exigencies of practice demand an operational framework; but the conceptual expanse of the establishment's framework itself cannot be limited within it. In fact, it must always keep at the back of its consciousness the belief of that propriety of conduct must transcend legality, that the latter is only an operational framework, a narrow and therefore defective one at that, we acquiesce in for want of another that encompasses all myriads of this subtle mosaic.

It is hence improper to consider issues that fall within the purview of legal regulations or control as the only legitimate concern of medical, or psychiatric, ethics. Neither need our concepts or activities be guided or motivated solely by considerations that come in contact or conflict with the law. Unfortunately, the history of medical, especially psychiatric, ethics is so influenced to a degree that is not inconsequential. Such an attitude is more an attempt to safeguard one's professional interests. Or, to put it more bluntly, to save one's skin, especially in the face of compensation claims. We kid ourselves into believing it a proper implementation of ethical principles. If ethics is considered synonymous with this attitude, overtly or covertly, it only reflects our lack of understanding of what ethics conceptually involves, and shows how unethical we can be about ethics itself. This becomes more glaring when the need for the psychiatrist to make vital moral decisions is considered pervasive, infiltrating every facet of his work (Bloch and Chodoff, 1984a) : 'And his



task is made more complicated by the fact that most of the ethical problems he faces have not hitherto been dealt with, let alone resolved. Some problems have not even begun to receive systematic study'. There could be an element of denial here, for psychiatric practice itself may be characterised by uncertainties and ambiguities which it constantly struggles to keep within bounds (ibid). It may signify the medical man's search for a system of medicine allegedly free of ethical values (Szasz 1960). Or a belief that his therapeutic activities do not and should not have any political consequences. Halleck (1971) believes that a psychiatrist has a political role to play, whether he is prepared to recognize it or not, and this role has significant social and ethical implications. Bloch and Chodoff (1984a) agree 'thoroughly' with this contention. This, however, is a topic by itself for which much could be said either way.

In all our discussion till now, and further, we will be guided by what Chodoff (1984) has so succinctly put as the dilemma of psychiatry viewing. The psychiatrist has to acknowledge that his dissent, especially if stated very strongly, can harm his profession, and in addition, might confuse the public. But that does not of course mean that the psychiatrist indulge in rationalizations which enable him to ignore his true beliefs.

### *Involuntary Hospitalization and Informed Consent*

There is then the issue of involuntary hospitalization as well as informed consent. In all the meanderings of both these procedures we know the essential core involved. The dilemma is of control and forced conformity by one agency of another. The fears, not altogether unfounded, are of misuse of power when one exercises control over another's mind. Thus involuntary hospitalization raises all the questions about who should decide such a need and under what condition is it invariable. The consensus opinion that emerges is that law enforcing bodies alone



are so empowered, the psychiatrist only acting as an ally who imparts his professional expertise, if asked for. In the case of informed consent, again, the establishment knows how the concept is basically defective, though that need not mean it is not a workable one in the absence of anything better. What are issues like information and consent, after all? They cannot ever be a one-way process. We may impart the best of information but unless grasped by the other side, it cannot be supposed to arouse any reasoned consent. Both information and consent are, in fact, two way processes. Information becomes what it is only when processed by another. Consent again becomes legitimate only if the agency seeking it carries out legitimate activities to obtain it, and the other is in a state of mind to understand what he is consenting for.

We know, however, how both these issues are efficiently side-tracked in most discussions of informed consent. We know also how the very fact that one party may make the most honest attempts to inform – and that may not be altogether without doubt – the basic difficulty is with the person supposed to be informed and in a position to give valid consent. For example, how do you gain a proper informed consent from a paranoid psychotic with most personality functions intact except for his morbid paranoid delusions? He does not believe he is sick. He can convince the Court and the police that he is able to lead a not altogether unreasonable life, albeit with his oddities and eccentricities. And yet the close relatives, the ones with whom he stays and interacts, know the chaos that he causes in their personal relationship, the disruption of intimate bonds that results, and the decline in finer qualities and blunting of appropriate affect. Here we are faced with the difficulty of obtaining any valid consent. Will such a patient be ever certified anywhere unless he lands up markedly psychotic or commits a heinously



barbaric act? Will such a person ever give a valid informed consent in spite of our best efforts? This although each psychiatrist can vouch for the tremendous amount of social morbidity unleashed by the poison of paranoia let loose on an unsuspecting society thereby. Are we then not essentially only saving our skins by our talk of failure to obtain informed consent? Are we not shirking our responsibility by letting such individuals loose in society? This, especially when certain agencies raise the question of individual liberty, of the fundamental right to freedom of expression and movement in this context, — and the establishment responds by sheepishly taking the cover of legal helplessness and hassles. Which is quite unnecessary because every psychiatrist places high on his list the value of individual liberty and right to self-expression or self-decision, and when he suggests the abrogation of these rights, he does so not to force or coerce people into subjugation but to help them regain their earlier levels of judgements and self-expression, if not fully atleast as great a level as is possible; and help temporarily restrain them from harming these rights of others. For any social system to work, both functions are invariable. And the establishment need be defensive only if it is as unsure of its methods as its opponents and detractors make it out to be. Also we know very well that if we continue to value liberty so exclusively we might find ourselves taking an anti-humanistic position (Halleck 1974a) and 'the minority who suffer from psychiatric illness... will suffer if a liberty they cannot enjoy is made superior to a health that must sometimes be forced upon them' (Michels 1973). As Peele and Chodoff et al (1974) state, 'it is a perversion and travesty to deprive these needy and suffering people of treatment in order to preserve a liberty which is in actuality so destructive as to constitute another form of imprisonment'. In other words, the duty of beneficence enjoins us to carry out activities for the benefit of the client and empowers us with the necessary moral



guidelines, whether accepted by law or otherwise. Here a legitimate conflict between the duty of the establishment and the over-seeing authority of the law is inevitable and on moral grounds, both intuitive and critical, the establishment must have the courage to stand by its duty to the client as much as to the social set-up and offer clear explanation and examples of how this should be so. For this of course it needs to be convinced in its own mind about the moral justification for its activity, and although expediency may indicate discretion, be convinced of no other.

This is one sphere in which we must avoid, taking the cover of legality. Or avoid coming to grips with the problem altogether. Both these are reactions of moral unconviction, no doubt born as much out of extraneous influences as self-doubt and an enthusiastic but misdirected self-scrutiny.

Once beaten twice shy can be the response of the pragmatic practising psychiatrist faced with one such patient in his life-time. He then avoids any persuasion. Persuasion becomes for him a form of coercion. The paranoid patient's way of looking at things becomes the professional's cover for his own self-deception. He escapes thus but also lets loose so much morbidity for the society to face. This may be perfectly camouflaged by him in an interpretation of professional rights and privileges by means of which a physician may refuse to take on the treatment of a patient. But here a concentration on rights amounts to selfish evasion of one's duties. Ethics being essentially concerned with duties, must therefore be undermined by such practices. This must become one of the problems to tackle.

The second is involuntary hospitalization. The law of course steps in whenever there is the question of control over a citizen's fundamental rights of freedom of speech, expression, movement



etc. But if this becomes for the establishment a front to avoid taking any decision in the welfare of the sick, having decided that one's role is limited to treatment and diagnosis of willing patients alone, the psychiatrist can be morally accused of underplaying his role. Discretion may dictate circumscription of one's role around these two concepts. But, ethically speaking, his role transcends that. His prime purpose is to bring about reduction in social morbidity. He must moreover also educate, he must as well create awareness, in the society at large and legislators and the judiciary in particular. That they would view his role with concern bordering on suspicion (Appelbaum 1984, Daes 1986) is a natural phase in this relationship which can undergo a complementary status only over a period of time, as both sides work through their interpersonal conflicts – to borrow a concept from psychodynamics – and are able to get rid of insecurities that force them to erect barricades to realisation and healthy interaction. To achieve this the establishment will need to develop a proper sense of accountability in which it acknowledges 'an obligation to present to the public a reasonably coherent picture of the nature, scope, effectiveness and limitations of the profession' (Chodoff 1981). It will, moreover, have to be clear whether its professional expertise can definitely help those whom it seeks to involuntarily hospitalize, or the targets of their hurt. It will have to produce concrete unimpeachable evidence to this effect. It will, further, need to deal thoroughly and decisively with the black-sheep and mischievous amongst its own ranks. Only then can the average psychiatrist stand up and say with moral authority that to confine a suicidal depressive or a homicidal paranoid will help the former get rid of his suicidal, and the latter of his homicidal, ideation. We are sure this happens in most cases where treatment can be delivered without unnecessary constraints and every psychiatrist knows that, but for some treatment failures, the therapeutic procedures at his



disposal can bring about remission to a satisfactory degree in the majority of cases; and in those where remission occurs the relief and gratitude of the patient as well as his relative is the bonus of good-will on which the whole establishment rests. The difficulty is that treatment failures complain and seek redress and there is no corresponding rebuttal from the side of those who have benefitted. This is but natural and is understandable. Also natural and understandable is the establishment's defensive attitude in such circumstances. But what is natural and understandable is not what is necessarily appropriate. Here again we must ascend in our thinking and critically judge for ourselves whether what we are doing is for the general welfare of our patients or not. Have we been consistently successful in some types of psychiatric problems? Have we consistently failed in certain others? And are both these mainly related to our present expertise? In such a case, we should categorically be able to say that in 'X' type of case, involuntary confinement helps, but in 'Y' type, according to our present level of expertise, it does not. And after setting such limits, we must stick to them consistently till we have evidence to refute or modify this line of action. If our activities are directed thus, inflated and unnecessary duelling would stop, while healthy questioning and consequent modification continues.

In all this the psychiatrist may sometimes have to act at personal risk, and that is part of the hazard of being a professional in this unique branch. For psychiatrists need to be alert to the possibility that they are avoiding responsible action because it is difficult and painful (Chodoff 1984). We do not mean to say one invites troubles for oneself by being rash or over-bearing. Far from it. This in fact is what has encouraged the improper control by other agencies of the psychiatrist - patient relationship which has caused estrangement in both. It has even prompted



agencies like a United Nations Committee to find involuntary admission unjustifiable and worthy of abolition since it is 'abused' in several parts of the world 'especially against persons who defend fundamental freedoms or exercise their human rights', (Daes 1986), for psychiatric mistreatment is a sinister abuse of scientific and medical technology and psychiatric drugs are used for torturing persons diagnosed as mentally ill (Daes 1986). What we need is neither an aggressive over-lordship nor a meek acquiescence. We need a firm commitment toward the good of both the client and the social framework in which he exists, irrespective of the constraints and the paranoia that may exist in societal agencies. By irrespective we do not sanction a steam roller aggressivity. What we rather mean is a firm, persistent commitment to certain values of professional conduct and an abiding conviction in the worth of action that follows therefrom. No code of conduct which condones any of these can be said to exist on morally sound principles. No sound philosophical basis, therefore, can be claimed for them, either. As Chodoff (1981, 1984) states, 'It is a hallmark of psychiatry that in a number of areas (e.g. involuntary hospitalization, the insanity defense) the psychiatrist operates as an interface between the rights of the individual and the requirements of society. On such occasions the sometimes difficult issue to be faced is whether true responsibility to society necessitates adherence to professional standards or to societal dictates'. And he states further, 'a psychiatrist may find himself in circumstances when he believes that he can discharge his proper responsibility to society only by resisting its dictates if he believes that these are intolerable because they are in conflict with the ethics and values of his profession'.

To the question whether the establishment accord primacy to the dictates of professional conscience or the requirements of social conscience, the answer cannot be simple. Yet some guide-



lines can be definitely offered. At the ideational level, social conscience is of course supreme and all professional considerations have to be made subservient to it. But to say so is not to acknowledge that this social conscience is a concrete unchangeable entity. A major part of all reformist activity must be guided by the knowledge that this social conscience is a concept, and a concept amenable to change and modification. While professional conscience can never tear up or annihilate social conscience, it can, and must, try to educate it, even modify it by legitimate means that the socio-political atmosphere of a region provides. In so doing it will probably realize the true and legitimate political role that some of those we mentioned earlier (Halleck 1971, Bloch and Chodoff 1984a) envisage for the psychiatric establishment. For we do know that a society's concern for unorthodox ideas and behaviour amongst its members appears to be universal (Bloch 1984), whether in closed or open societies although certainly varying in degree. The political dissenters labelled psychiatrically sick is but one manifestation of this phenomenon; it probably occurs in a more ubiquitous manner than the establishment is wont to grant, and not all the popular fiction of psychiatric diagnoses as a tool to ostracize and manipulate can be considered baseless. For "without the stigmatization of some acts and some people as 'abnormal' or 'anti-social', there would be no idea of the normal, no rules to govern social behaviour...it follows that people whose behaviour is labelled as schizophrenic, criminal, inadequate or otherwise anti-social provide the yardstick by which acceptable conduct is measured. Society is making use of them for its own ends, the orthodox depend on the unorthodox to define their own orthodoxy; but the labels tend to be attached to people haphazardly. Behaviour which is seen as psychiatric disturbance in one society may be regarded as criminal in another, and simply tolerated in a third (1978).



The second question is whether the establishment can ever waive its responsibility towards the community at large. Before we answer this question, let us see what this entails.

### *Societal Answerability*

The ethical thinker, philosophical or otherwise, will have to combine the idealism of the absolutist or deontologist thinker (with his ideals of good and evil, proper and improper) with the utilitarian goals of implementing it for maximising societal mental health while reducing psychological morbidity. While being cognizant of both, he will not be unnecessarily bogged down by their seemingly diverse positions (see Foot, 1967; also Singer 1979, for review). By following the latter, he will of course add to the former. But the ethical code cannot be circumscribed to this alone. In promoting positive mental health, he must interact vigorously with *all* those agencies that have exerted and continue to exert such profound influence on the mental health of the community at large. Its code must therefore envisage a consciousness towards societal good wherein interaction with both local and governmental social welfare bodies, with other professionals, especially of the judiciary, with the fourth estate, the intelligentsia and the media of mass communications play a role. For this the establishment must get over as soon as possible its reluctance to be judged by others. Psychiatry and its practitioners will have to move out of the hallowed precincts of their institutions and consulting rooms, and more so, their ivory-towers of encapsulated and isolated world-viewing, and make themselves answerable to the community at large. Psychiatrists exert a significant influence in many areas of public life as well as in the lives of their patients, and they have been insufficiently responsive to the public in accounting this influence (Chodoff 1981). All those who hold power over others have to account for it, politicians, educators, researchers, corporate



officers or others. The psychiatrist can be no exception. They will further have to provide channels of communication and monitoring agencies to assure the public that they are in effective control of their activities and are effectively policing their ranks (Chodoff 1984). And for the goal of maximising mental health, they must be unflinchingly ready to be baptised by the fire of critical, sharp and incisive scrutiny by other social welfare agencies. This appears a tall order with an establishment as wrapped up in self-protective activities as at present. But there is no reason to lament that it will not be able to rise out of this self-inflicted morass over a period of time. This cannot but be so in the case of a branch that has retained its healthy core amidst the most unhealthy draughts, both from without and within. One only wishes the hope inherent in this dialogue matches the conviction of the establishment that must profess it. And a firm philosophical enquiry into its ethical basis should supply it some of the roots to strengthen this commitment and the convictions from which it should spring.

No doubt some psychiatrists will play a greater role than others here. But none can escape from this role; their commitment will be adviseable in atleast as great a measure as is in their honest capacity. This is also to obviate the compulsions that would be otherwise entailed, if present trends are any indications of future portents. Even pragmatism hence demands it. Moreover, the maturity and comprehensivity with which the psychiatrist tackles his patient and his branch must be transparently clear to the community in which he has the honour to be a professional. In this respect, the responsibility of the establishment and its individual members to promote an equitable distribution of services throughout the society, rich or poor, in private practice or in public or charitable institutions, and to as fair a level as is honestly possible becomes a pressing need



(Chodoff 1984). The failure to achieve this goal is a serious problem for all western countries and the rest may not be lagging far behind. Here we will also have to consider how societal responsibility could be maximized by tackling more than a mere handful of patients that psychiatrists all over are wont to do, in private or even in public institutions. The concept of distributive justice has to prevail and the establishment has a duty to obliterate inequities as manifest 'in the difference in treatment goals for the economically or ethnically disadvantaged and for the better off' (Chodoff 1984). Also closely related is governmental and other resource allocation to maximal population coverage as opposed to concentrated service that benefits a few. Already intensive psychotherapeutic set-ups in Britain are being considered a luxury the nation can ill afford on governmental costs. The establishment will further have to answer whether mental health, like health care in general, is a right of citizens rather than an 'optimal consumer good' (Livine 1979). For this Chodoff (1984) feels it must first define what it means by mental health itself, then state if mental health is freedom from disease or a state of self-actualization, then what role its various treatment modalities have in achieving either, and the support it should receive from public resources. He feels 'psychiatry has not as yet provided a firm answer to this question; it is its ethical duty to do so if possible or to acknowledge that it cannot'. Of course the problem cannot end here, for just because no categorical answer can be given at present does not mean work and search for an answer is not proceeding, or cannot proceed, side by side. A true accountability to society would involve doing away with the establishment's reluctance to be answerable on this account.

The establishment must envisage such an implementation of its code of ethics that encourages, nay obliges, members to carry



this out in some measure. Professionals are expected to exercise their moral authority not only as individuals, but as a group when they promote those values for which society has assigned them responsibility (Michels 1981). Only then can it be said that a sound philosophical base exists for psychiatric ethics. Then the ethics of the profession becomes morality in practice and presents ethics for what it essentially is – an affirmation of duties, of conduct, and only secondarily of rights and privileges. And pious declaration becomes proven acts e.g., 'I pledge myself to consecrate my life to the service of humanity', (Declaration of Geneva 1948) and 'a physician must recognize responsibility not only to patients, but also to society, to other health professionals, and to self' (Principles of Medical Ethics of American Medical Association 1980); as also, 'A physician must recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to an improved community' (ibid); In research on man, the interest of science and society should never take precedence over considerations related to the well-being of the subject (The Declaration of Helsinki 1964); 'Is this (experimental) procedure one which I would not hesitate to advise, or in which I would readily agree if it were undertaken upon my own wife or children?' (Principles of Experimental Research on Human Being of the British Medical Association, 1963); 'the psychiatrist has to consider the ethical implications specific to psychiatry as well as the ethical demands on all physicians and the societal duties of every man and woman' (The Declaration of Hawai 1977); '(the physician must) work conscientiously wherever the interests of society demand'. (The physician's Oath of the Soviet Union 1971); The honoured ideals of the medical profession imply that the responsibilities of the physician extend not only to the individual, but also to society where these responsibilities deserve his interest and participation in activities which have the purpose of improving both the health and the well being of the individual and the



*Psychiatric Ethics*

community' (Principles of Medical Ethics with Annotations Especially Applicable to Psychiatry of the American Medical Association)<sup>5</sup>.

*Concluding Remarks*

Of course it is in the nature of an ethical enquiry to raise more questions than it can answer. For, raising of questions means we are alive to the environment and actively interacting with it. But often ethical enquiry gets circumscribed thus. Moreover, it is at present, or rather always was, more fashionable to ask difficult questions that stump our audiences and leave them groping for an answer. Such manoeuvres only camouflage our lack of truly informed concern not only from others, but also from ourselves; for misinformed concern can be no less difficult to manage than unconcern. Henceforth, however, we should avoid all but the most necessary of such games-playing. If every ethical thinker has the right to raise questions, it is also his duty to try and answer some of them. Or suggest suitable pointers. Though we do accept that their expertise may not really lie here, atleast of some of them, and all they may be able to offer as answers are nothing more than worn-out cliches and pious declarations, that in itself will help them, and others, realise where each stands. For the glib questioner will be properly chastised, and the arrogant professional primed to sit up and think for himself. A concrete goal-oriented search for answers to some of our nagging enquiries in the ethical field must now begin to engage our active consideration. Here the philosophical attitude, rather than being a hindrance, can serve both as a catalyst and a governor: for if certain answer-seeking may need to be encouraged, certain others will need to be tempered. The minimum that need happen before anything worthwhile can result is that the average vigilant psychiatrist becomes aware of certain basic concepts of philosophical enquiry as they interact with, or are



useful to, his own understanding of his ethical code (as well as his branch itself), sift the proper from the improper in the light of this, and hold on to the proper while getting rid of the improper. The average vigilant philosopher similarly has a role to play in that although he cannot avoid offering abstract generalisations he need also offer concrete working concepts in his ethical enquiries, since the exigencies of this situation demand it.

The difficulties in doing so are no doubt many, and will be better appreciated if we understand the basic dichotomy in the training, expertise and value-orientation of the philosophical thinker and the practising professional. While the former prides himself, and cherishes, (quite legitimately perhaps), the ability to ask resolute questions, the professional (equally legitimately) concentrates energies mainly to find answers. Hence there can be a basic, and unavoidable, divergence as much of orientation as of emphasis. When, therefore, we think of making our questions relevant to an answer-seeker, as in the present situation, we must avoid any but the most operational ones, and certainly avoid those that appear arm-chair or ivory-tower pontifications not cognizant of applicability. For nothing puts off professionals more than this; and communication thus severed has hardly a chance to be re-established. Philosophers, therefore, will have to indulge in only such questioning as prompts, guides, even excites professionals to search for answers, even as they make them aware of the multitude of questions that remain to be answered. And it must come in this order; if reversed, communication has every chance of being severed or becoming skewed. While so doing, they must avoid smug generalisations or sticky hair-splitting; they must further forbear the impatience of the professional's obsession with solution seeking. Even as they do so, they must endeavour to lay the broad foundations of a solid theory of values, which is their basic philosophical concern. This



should unfold in its majesticity before the professional only as he graduates in his thinking faculties to match those of the philosopher and develops the ability to make and integrate ostensibly anarchical enquiries as philosophical questioning is often wont to do. Only then the foundation of a solid communication that ensures progress would have been laid.

To put it in a nutshell. The philosopher's abstract generalisations, then, will often need to be at a minimum. Their applicable operable definitions and frameworks will have to be maximised. Of course the abstract cannot but be present, but in a covert form, as an under-lying broad principle alive to the special needs of this situation, and therefore one that does not dominate it, for by so doing it would only undermine its own importance. As philosophical concepts become more understandable to those who have to implement them, they will serve the dual purpose of actualizing themselves and getting rid of needless vacuity. They will, further, become vital, and their energizing influence on professionals cannot but afford health-giving feed-back.

This then is the role to which the philosophically oriented must rise; and in so doing they will only hasten their own fulfilment. For, if Plato dreamt of a 'philosopher-king', we have yet to find that commitment amongst his successors which can convert this dream into reality. The establishment itself also needs to know that a robust grounding in a theory of values and striving to make it workable will gain for it that forward thrust which is within its potential but continuously eludes its grasp. For this, some amongst its own ranks must closely study the philosophical base of establishment itself, as well as its ethics and the stance of the moral philosopher, (as indeed of the Social Sciences and the Humanities at large; and even of its detractors),



and find paradigms useful for its own proper growth. Any dampening of vigour that results therefrom can only be over adventurous elements in the branch that have usurped positions of importance. Here, a meeting ground must be first laid down on the basis of a consensus, particularly on the basis of the lowest common denominator, gradually working upward to encompass wider and subtler entities. For this, open-ness to critical scrutiny is a must for the establishment, as is acknowledgement of errors and activities aimed at their speedy termination. Similarly, a necessary second step is to understand rather than neglect the abstruse and acknowledge its importance wherever due. The establishment can give a lead in this, for often philosophical thinkers, being only human, can be unduly pompous and, for all their declared catholicity, more dogmatic about convictions than is healthy for their own philosophizing.

Gradually, then, as barriers of communication are removed, the result will be a sound-based practicality for the professional and a living-philosophy for the philosopher. This need not only remain a hope and a dream; for ideals that cannot be practised are not worthy of being called ideals. In any case, they are hardly likely to fire the imagination of professionals. This then is the challenge to both sides. This then is also our hope.

13/14, Shiv Kripa

Oppo. St. Mary's Convent

Nahur, Mulund (West)

Bombay - 400 080

AJAI R. SINGH

And

SHAKUNTALA A. SINGH



## NOTES

1. In India ethics has been discussed only twice in the *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* (Singh 1965, Dube 1982), both well-intentioned forays which have not spawned the interest they should have.
2. Some notable British comments have been Roth (1976) on involuntary hospitalization, Blumenfeld (1974) and Rosen & Rekers *et al* (1978) on ethical issues and the treatment of children, and Jones (1978) on societal responsibility of psychiatrists.
3. This of course is but a representative sample; many more can be cited.
4. We use the two terms in their widest possible connotation here, wherein absolutism is also the opposite of relativism and utilitarianism is also utility to self, here, the profession involved; this, of course, is not how Hare, 1984, would understand these terms.
5. Unless otherwise specified, the word 'establishment' later on in the text means 'psychiatric establishment'.
6. Words underlined are to be considered italicized.
7. Although Rappeport talks here to the juvenile justice system, it is a typical example of pique and hurt of well-intentioned exasperation. And the broader generalisation about the honesty of the establishment's intentions is implied. Society's intentions are not proven to be questionable here, as elsewhere, precisely because its standpoint is essentially of the championing watch-dog type, and it must, by the very logic of its existence, come at times in adversarial contact with the establishment.
8. Parenthesis added. All the Ethical Codes quoted above are from Bloch and Chodoff (1984b).

## REFERENCES

- Appelbaum, P. S. (1984), "The Supreme Court Looks at Psychiatry". *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 141 : 7, pp. 827-835.
- Bazelon, L. D. (1978a), "The Psychiatrist in Court". In : *Controversy in Psychiatry*. (Ed.) John Paul Brady and H. Keith H. Brodie, Philadelphia : Saunders, pp. 909-917.
- Bazelon, D. (1978b), "The Role of the Psychiatrist in the Criminal Justice System". *American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Bulletin*, Vol. VI, pp. 139-146.
- Bloch, S. (1984), "The Political Misuse of Psychiatry in the Soviet Union". In : *Psychiatric Ethics* (Ed.) Sidney Block & Paul Chodoff, Oxford : Oxford University Press, pp. 322-341.



Bloch, S. & Chodoff P. (1984a), Introduction. In : *Psychiatric Ethics*, (Ed.) Sidney Bloch and Paul Chodoff, Oxford : Oxford University Press, pp. 1-12.

Bloch, S., & Chodoff, P. (1984b), "Appendix Code of Ethics". In : *Psychiatric Ethics* (Eds.) Sidney Bloch and Paul Chodoff, Oxford : Oxford University Press, pp. 343-360.

Blumenfeld, A. (1974), "Ethical Problems in Child Guidance", *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. 47, pp. 17-26.

Braceland, F. J. (1969), "Historical Perspectives of the Ethical Practice of Psychiatry", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 126, pp. 230-237.

Chavez, I. (1964), "Professional Ethics in our Time", *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 190, pp. 226-231.

Chodoff, P. (1976), "The Case for Involuntary Hospitalization of the Mentally Ill". *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 133, pp. 496-501.

Chodoff, P. (1981), The Responsibilities of Psychiatrists to Society. In : *Law and Ethics in the Practice of Psychiatry*, (Ed.) Charles K. Hofling, New York : Brunner / Mazel, pp. 225-238.

Chodoff, P. (1984), "The Responsibility of the Psychiatrist to his Society". In : *Psychiatric Ethics* (Ed.) Sidney Bloch and Paul Chodoff, Oxford : Oxford University Press, pp. 306-321.

Daes, E. I. (1986), Principles, Guidelines and Guarantees for the Protection of Persons Detained on Grounds of Mental Ill Health or Suffering from Mental Disorder, New York : United Nations.

Dube, K. C. (1982), "Morals in Medicine", *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 24, 1, pp. 8-14.

Foot, P. (1967), *Theories of Ethics* (Ed.), Cambridge, Massachussets : Harvard University Press.

Halleck, S. (1971), *The Politics of Therapy*, New York : Science House, p. 13.

Halleck, S. L., (1974a), "A Troubled View of Current Trends in Forensic Psychiatry". *Journal of Psychiatric Law*, Vol. 2, pp. 135-157.

Halleck, S. L., (1974b), "Legal and Ethical Aspects of Behavinura Control", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 131, pp. 381-387.

Hare, R. M. (1952), *The Language of Morals*, Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Hare, R. (1981), *Moral Thinking : Its Levels, Method, and Point*, Oxford : Oxford University Press.



*Psychiatric Ethics.*

Hare, R. (1984), "The Philosophical Basis of Psychiatric Ethics". In : *Psychiatric Ethics* (Ed.) Sidney Bloch and Paul Chodoff, Oxford : Oxford University Press, pp. 31-45.

Jones, K. (1978), "Society Looks at the Psychiatrist", *British Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 132, pp. 321-332.

Kaplan, H. I., and Sadock B. J. (1985), "Forensic Psychiatry". In : *Modern Synopsis of Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry / IV*, IV Ed. Baltimore : William and Wilkins, pp. 887-898.

Karasu, T. T. (1980), "The Ethics of Psychotherapy", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 137 : 12, pp. 1502-1512.

Levine, C. (1979), "Ethics and Health Cost Containment : Report from Hasting Center Conference", *Hasting Center Report*, Vol. 9, pp. 10-17.

Michels, R. (1973), "The Right to Refuse Psychotropic Drugs", *Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 3, pp. 10-11.

Michels, R. (1976), "Professional Ethics and Social Values". *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 3, pp. 377-384.

Michels, R. (1981), "The Responsibility of Psychiatry to Society". In : *Law and Ethics in the Practice of Psychiatry* (Ed.) Charles K. Hofling. New York : Brunner / Mazel, pp. 239-251.

Monahan, M. (1977), "John Stuart Mill on the Liberty of the Mentally Ill", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 134, pp. 1428-1429.

Moore, R. A. (1978), "Ethics in the Practice of Medicine : Origins, Functions, Models and Enforcement", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 135, pp. 157-162.

Murray, G. B. (1979), "Ethics at the Crossroads", *Psychiatric Annals*, Vol. 9, pp. 21-28.

O'Conner V Donaldson (1975), 422 US 563.

Peele, R., Chodoff P., and Taub N. (1974), "Involuntary Hospitalization and Treatability : Observations from the District of Columbia Experience", *Catholic University Law Review*, Vol. 23, pp. 744-753.

Rappeport, J. R. (1978), "The Psychiatrist and Criminal Justice : From Police Investigation to Prisoner Rehabilitation". In : *Controversy in Psychiatry*, (Ed.) John Paul Brady and H. Keith, H. Brodie, Philadelphia : Saunders, pp. 918-932.

Redlich, F., and Mollica A. (1976), "Overview : Ethical Issues in Contemporary Psychiatry", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 133, pp. 125-126.



Rosen, A. C., Rekers, G. A., and Bentler, P. M. (1978), "Ethical Issues in the Treatment of Children". *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 34, pp. 122-136.

Roth, M. (1976), "Schizophrenia and the Theories of Szasz", *British Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 129, pp. 317-326.

Singer, P. (1979), *Practical Ethics*. Cambridge University Press.  
Singh, H. (1965), "Psychiatry, Ethics and Religion", *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 7 : 4, pp. 278-286.

Slovenko, R. (1985), "Law and Psychiatry". In : *Comprehensive Text-book of Psychiatry / IV*, IV Ed., (Ed.) H. I. Kaplan and B. J. Sadock, Baltimore : Williams & Wilkins, pp. 1960-1990.

Somers, A. R. (1977), "Accountability, Public Policy and Psychiatry", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 134, pp. 959-965.

Spiegel, R. (1978), Editorial : On Psychoanalysis, Values and Ethics, *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 6, pp. 271-273

Szasz, T. S. (1960), "The Myth of Mental Illness", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 15, pp. 113-118.

Szasz, T. S. (1963), *Law, Liberty and Psychiatry : An Inquiry into the Social Uses of Mental Health Practices*, New York : Macmillan.

Szasz, T. S. (1970), *The Manufacture of Madness : A Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement*, New York : Harper and Row.

Szasz, T. S. (1974), *The Myth of Mental Illness : Foundation of a Theory of Personal Conduct*. New York : Harper and Row.

Szasz, T. S. (1978), "Under any circumstances - No". In : *Controversy in Psychiatry*, (Ed.) John Paul Brady and H. Keith, H. Brodie, Philadelphia : Saunders pp. 965-977,

Towery, O. B., and Sharfstein S. S. (1978), "Fraud and Abuse in Psychiatric Practice", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 135 : 1, pp. 92-94.

Veatch, R. M. (1973), "Generalization of Expertise", *Hastings Center Studies*, Vol. 1, pp. 29-40.

Vitek V. Jones, (1980), 445 US 480.

Warnock, M. (1978), *Ethics Since 1900*, Oxford : Oxford University Press.

West L. T. (1968); "Ethical Psychiatry and Biological Humanism". *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 126 : 2. pp. 226-230.



## BOOK-REVIEW

Chinchore, Dr. Mangala R., *Vāḍanyāya : The Nyāya-Buddhist Controversy*. Delhi, Sri Satguru Publications, 1988, pp. xx+213, Rs. 150.00

To say that traditions of ideas develop dialectically would be merely to state the obvious. Free thinking societies — and ancient India provides an outstanding example — abhor mental blinders and ideological straitjackets. Intellectual freedom necessarily leads to plurality of standpoints. No sooner than an alternate line of thinking comes into being, mutual interaction in the form of refutation counter-refutation, logical defence and readjustments also begin. This process is the first condition for all intellectual stimulation.

Hegel was perhaps the first to point this process out in the chequered history of Greek thought. Dialectical value of the Sophist movement came to be acknowledged in the course of this exercise. It was clearly demonstrated that as far as the historical process was concerned, there were no heroes and villains. Every actor on the stage makes significant contribution to the ongoing drama. In our own case, historical circumstances compelled the first generation modern writers on the subject to lay so much emphasis on 'unity' that 'diversity' almost became something to be treated like a bad dream ! One consequently gathers little idea of the actual historical development from the better known accounts of Indian philosophy. Every sect and school is regarded as an autonomous unit with little or no interaction with other similar ideological capsules or cocoons.



The work under review deserves kudos for being one of the very few to break out of this stagnant pool of ahistoricity. If my memory serves me right, Stcherbatsky was the first scholar of note to call for an objective understanding of the dialectical process responsible for the remarkable advances logic made in ancient India. While himself dealing with one aspect of Buddhist logic, he wanted others to try and unravel the actual relationship which obtained between the Buddhists and the Naiyāyikas. This was no ordinary task since it required good grounding in both the traditions as well as a first-hand acquaintance with the sources. Dharmendra Nath Shastri took up the challenge in his remarkable *Critique of Indian Realism*, dedicated to three *ris*, Stcherbatsky one of them !

Dr. Chinchore has, perhaps advisedly, concentrated on a somewhat inadequately analysed—understood text of Dharmakīrti the *Vādanāyā*. This enables her to communicate Dharmakīrti's flavour to the non-specialists better. And yet hers is not a merely expository endeavour. As she discloses, her intention is "to reinterpret the relevant text with a view to rediscovering the key problems discussed in it, to find out the general framework—conceptual and categorial—within which they are raised and to study their implications."

The authoress has carried out her task very methodically. She devotes the first three chapters to present what may be regarded, at least partly, as the *pūrvapakṣa*. The first chapter is largely introductory from the Buddhist standpoint while the next two deal with the Nyāya position on the *Nigrahasthānas* and *hetvābhāsas*. She shows good understanding of Gautama, Vātsyāyana and Uddyotakara and while dealing with them she cannot be accused of being biased against them. This must be regarded as positive merit in any research work. She has her sympathies with Dharmakīrti, as is amply borne out by the sixth chapter,



*Book-Review*

but does not allow this to colour her vision. The fourth chapter explicates Dharmakīrti's methodological framework while the fifth elucidates his refutation of the twenty two *Nigrahasthānas* admitted by the Naiyāyikas. The final chapter encapsulates the Nyāya rejoinder in the decades and centuries after Dharmakīrti.

The book deserves wide attention. Product of a painstakingly honest labour, it makes one optimistic about research activity in our universities. The only discordant note that needs being sounded is regarding the language and printing. It is our misfortune that one has to write in a alien language to be understood all over the country. All of us suffer because of this constraint, some more, some less. However, I am sure a good editor assisted by some conscientious proof-readers could have added to the charm of this book.

Buddhist Studies have come to stay as a distinct discipline. We have departments or special assistance programmes to promote Buddhist Studies in several universities. The authoress would be well-advised to have the work translated in Indian languages.

Philosophy Department

PRATAP CHANDRA

Dr. Harisingh Gaur Vishvavidyalay

SAGAR-470 003 (M.P.)



**Life Members (Individual)**

263. Dr. Anjani Kumar Singh,  
Param Jyot Nivas,  
Alhadapur  
GORAKHPUR 273 001. (U.P.)
264. Fr. Maria Arokiam Kanaga SDE  
The Retreat,  
Yercaud - 636 601  
SALEM ( T.N. )
265. Dr. Baliram Shukla,  
Philosophy Department,  
University of Poona,  
PUNE 411 007.
266. Dr. N. G. Mahadevappa,  
"Chaitanya"  
Kalyan Nagar,  
DHARWAD 580 007. (Karnatak)
267. Dr. (Mrs) Lata R. Chatre  
Philosophy Department,  
University of Poona,  
PUNE 411 007.



## BOOKS RECEIVED

- Bahadur, K. P.; *The Wisdom of Sāmkhya*, Delhi, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1988 (Reprint), pp. 222; 125/- (HC)
- Bahadur, K. P.; *The Wisdom of Yoga : A Study of Patñjali's Yoga Sūtra*, Delhi, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1988 (Reprint), pp. 116; Rs. 100/- (HC)
- Bahadur, K. P.; *The Wisdom of Nyāya*; Delhi, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1988 (Reprint), pp xi + 246; Rs. 150/- (HC).
- Bandyopadhyaya, Tirthanath; *Man : An Essay in Philosophical Anthropology*, Calcutta, Papyrus; 1988; pp. 153; Rs. 100/- (HC).
- Banerjee, K. K.; *Language, Knowledge and Ontology*, Calcutta, Indian Council of Philosophical Research in association with Rddhi-India, 1988; pp. xxv + 374; Rs. 180/- (HC)
- Banerjee, N. V.; *Towards Perpetual Peace*, Delhi, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla in association with Motilal Banarsidas, 1988; pp. xii + 233; 120/- (HC)
- Pandit, M. P.; *Studies in the Tantras and the Veda*, Delhi, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1988; pp. 168; Rs. 100/- (HC)
- Sanyal, Ritwik; *Philosophy of Music*, Bombay, Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1987; pp. xii + 228; Rs. 160/- (HC)



# DARSHAN - MANJARI

The Burdwan University Journal of Philosophy

*Editors :*

**Aminul Haque**

**Gopal Chandra Khan**

**Darshan-Manjari** is a philosophical journal published annually by the Department of Philosophy, Burdwan University West Bengal. It seeks to promote discussion and research in all areas of philosophy, eastern and western. Three volumes of the journal have already been published. Now it invites papers for its next volumes scheduled to be published by March every year.

All contributions to the journal, books for review and other editorial enquiries should be sent to : The Editors, **Darshan-Manjari**, Department of Philosophy, Burdwan University, Burdwan-713 104, West Bengal.



271378P

## WHITEHEAD'S METHOD OF EXTENSIVE ABSTRACTION

In ordinary parlance as well as in mathematics we have both intervals of space and (magnitudeless) points such that the extremities of some intervals, viz., the line-segments, are points. Now, there are three *prima facie* possibilities with regard to the question of primacy between intervals and points: (i) that the points are given and the intervals arise from them in some way (such as by summation or fluxion); (ii) that the intervals are given and the points arise from them in some way (such as by division or abstraction); and (iii) that both intervals and points are given independently of each other though certain relations hold between them as of necessity.

Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) has been much concerned with this question, but he has not actually stated in so many words as to why he had adopted one of these views and rejected the others. However, from the hints he drops here and there, we may say that his reasons must have been somewhat as follows.

A little consideration suffices to show that the third view does not really present a viable alternative. If a given relation holds between two terms as a matter of empirical fact, then it may be that the two terms are given independently of one another and of the relation that subsists between them. But if a relation is supposed to hold between two terms as of necessity and the relata are supposed to be indefinables or to be definable independently of each other and of the relation that subsists between

Received : 5-5-87



them as of necessity, then such a relationship can be asserted only in the form of a synthetic *a priori* proposition and only on the basis of intellectual intuition. Intuitionism has been a powerful movement in philosophy and mathematics, but, it seems that Kant was the last among notable philosophers to subscribe to such a view. The "synthetic *a priori* proposition" can now hardly be regarded as a proposition, and "intellectual intuition" can hardly be regarded as a source of knowledge. In any case, the third view not only evokes Ockham's Razor (if one of the other two views be substantiable) but actually involves a circularity as any attempt at directional analysis of the deductive system we call geometry will show. The second seems to have been the most widespread view among the Greeks, some taking an interval as constituted of a finitude of "extended" points, some regarding it as constituted of an infinitude of magnitudeless elements, and some as arising from the fluxion or motion of a point. The discovery of the incommensurability of the diagonal of a square with its side nipped the possibility of extended elements in its bud. The view that an interval consists of an infinitude of elements gave rise to a dilemma: if the elements have magnitude, no matter how small, then the interval must be infinite in magnitude; if the elements have no magnitude, then the interval has no magnitude either. The first horn of the dilemma, if all the elements have the same magnitude, has never been controverted. The second horn also remained unanswered until the 19th century when mathematicians developed the  $\aleph_1$  of transfinite numbers and it became possible to see how magnitudeless elements could give rise to an interval of positive magnitude. However, one should not accept as a datum something which was not among the primary data of sense perception. Four-dimensional spatio-temporal events are the ingredients of which the universe consists and which are our primary perceptual data. Hence, one had to arrive at the point from the four-



dimensional continuum of sense perception by some rational process of abstraction. The view that an interval arose by fluxion has the same drawback of taking something as a datum which is not among the primary data of sense perception. The possibility that the interval was given and the point arose from it by continued division had long ago been disproved by Zeno. If you divide a line-segment into two halves and then each of the halves in their turn into two halves and so on, then you never can arrive at the point. That the point arises from the interval by abstraction must be the true view, but while the Greek genius had intuitively jumped at the notion of a point, no one had ever actually abstracted the point from the interval—it had simply been assumed that the process of simplification led to the point.

It seems to me that in view of some such considerations, Whitehead put himself to the task of abstracting the point from the four dimensional spatio-temporal event or region with the help of a few indefinable notions embeded in sense perception and a number of reasonable axioms, and thus of endeavouring to establish geometry on a more secure epistemological foundation than had Euclid or even modern mathematicians.

## I

Whitehead has presented his method of extensive abstraction in four of his works :<sup>1</sup>

1. "La théorie relationiste de l'Espace", *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, XXIII (1916), pp. 423-54.
2. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge*, Cambridge, 1919, Part 3.
3. *The Concept of Nature*, Cambridge, 1920, Chapter 4.
4. *Process and Reality*, New York, 1929, Part 4.

The method presented in all these works is essentially the same although there are some differences among them in



matters of detail. It would in itself be of interest to study these differences and to trace the evolution of Whitehead's thought on and technique for extensive abstraction from his *Organisation of Thought* published in 1917 to the *Process and Reality* published in 1929. Some scholars have discussed some of these differences, but, I am not aware of any detailed study of those differences. However, in this article we propose to study the essential elements of Whitehead's method, since our main purpose here is to evaluate it, and shall therefore confine ourselves to only one of the four works. *Process and Reality*, which is his *magnum opus* and contains his most mature attempt at extensive abstraction.

Whitehead takes *region* and *extensive connection* as indefinable terms and explains his usage concerning these two terms from which we learn that the former is at least a four-dimensional continuum and the latter means any kind of relation that any two regions can have to one another. He first defines the concepts of inclusion or whole-part relationship, overlapping, dissection of a region (i.e., a set of mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive parts), intersect of two regions (i.e., a region in which two regions overlap), unique and multiple intersection of two regions (if there are two or more non-contiguous intersects of two regions then two regions have multiple intersection and if they have only one intersect then there is unique intersection), externally connected (i.e., contiguous), tangentially included (i.e., so contained that part shares in the 'surface' of the whole) and non-tangentially included (i.e., so contained in the interior that the part in question is completely surrounded by another part of the given region), and then introduces the notion of an abstractive set as a set of regions any two of which are such that one of them includes the other non-tangentially and none of which is included in every other



member of the set. Thus, he presents the notion of convergence to a geometrical entity, point, line, surface and solid, *without* postulating any of these entities. That is, we begin with a region R of any size and then take as a member a region M which is non-tangentially included in the given region, i.e., a part of region R which is surrounded on all sides by another part of R having some thickness so that the upper surface of M is not connected with any region not included in R. By taking smaller and smaller such parts of R as the members of our set we obtain a set of regions none of which is the smallest member and the regions converge to a solid, surface, line and point. (Even in the case of converging to a region, that is, to a four-dimensional continuum, it is clear that such a region is not a member of the set but lies beyond 'all' the members of the set, just like the *omega-plus-one*<sup>th</sup> member of an infinite convergent series, the members of the set approaching it more and more closely as we move down the converging end of R.)

Whitehead introduces the notion of one abstractive set *covering* another abstractive set (i.e., that of every member of one set non-tangentially including some member of the other) and that of 'equivalence' of abstractive sets, or in ordinary parlance, the notion of *sameness* of convergence. A geometrical element is now defined as a complete group of equivalent abstractive sets, equivalent to one another and to no other abstractive set outside the group. Then the notion of one geometrical element being incident in another geometrical element is introduced: when every member (abstractive set) of a geometrical element a covers every member of another geometrical element b, but a and b are not identical then b is said to be incident in a (i.e., to be contained in a). And now we reach the 'point' as a geometrical element in which no other geometrical element is incident.



Whitehead points out that this definition is to be compared with the Euclidean definition of a point as that which has no part.

We may now introduce the notion of being prime in reference to assigned conditions by which Whitehead means that no other geometrical element satisfying those conditions is incident in the given geometrical element. Whitehead points out that a point is an absolute prime in the sense that no other point or geometrical element can be incident in it. He is now in a position to define a segment as a geometrical element between points  $p$  and  $q$  in which  $p$  and  $q$  are incident and in which no geometrical element is incident in which also  $p$  and  $q$  are incident;  $p$  and  $q$  in such cases are to be called the end-points of the segment.

Whitehead now introduces the notions of a point being situated in a region and in the surface of a region : a point is situated in any region which is a member of one of the abstractive sets composing that point, and a point is situated in the surface of a region  $x$  when all the regions in which that point is situated overlap with  $x$  but are not included in  $x$ .

A complete locus of points can now be defined : A complete locus of points is a set of points that compose all the points situated in a region, or in the surface of a region, or all the points incident in a geometrical element. The volume of a region is a complete locus consisting of all points situated in that region; a surface of a region is a complete locus consisting of all the points situated in the surface of that region; and, a linear stretch between two end-points is a complete locus consisting of all the points incident in the segment between those two points.

Whitehead makes an important remark about the Euclidean definition of a straight line. He says that the weakness of this definition is that nothing has been deduced from it whereas the



uniqueness of a straight segment between two points (i.e., there being one and only one straight segment between any two points) should be deducible from it. Consequently, in modern times, as Whitehead points out, a straight line segment has been defined as the shortest distance between two points, and shortest distance has itself been practically defined as the line which is the route of certain physical occurrences. Whitehead tries to remedy this gap in the classical theory.

Whitehead mentions a class of oval regions and says that it is to be defined. The only weapon that he finds for this definition is the notion of regions which overlap with a unique intersect. He says that evidently it is a property of a pair of ovals that they can only overlap with unique intresection, but, he says, it is equally evident that some non-oval regions also overlap with unique intresection. However, he says, the class of ovals has the property that any non-oval region overlaps some oval regions with multiple intersection. He admits that a single oval region cannot be defined but a class of oval regions can be defined inasmuch as a class can be defined whose members have to each other and to non-oval regions the properties ascribed by him to the class of oval regions. Such a class, he says, will be called ovate.

Whitehead proposes a preliminary definition; An ovate abstractive set is an abstractive set whose members all belong to the complete ovate class under consideration. He then defines an ovate class of regions as those which fulfil a certain group of non-abstractive and a certain group of abstractive conditions. The non-abstractive conditions are: (i) any two overlapping ovate regions have a unique intersect which also is an ovate region; (ii) non-ovate region overlaps some ovate regions with multiple intersection; (iii) any ovate region overlaps some non-ovate regions with multiple intersection; (iv) the surface of any



two externally connected ovate regions touch either in a complete locus of points or in a single point; (v) the surface of a non-ovate region touches the surface of some ovate region externally connected with it in a set of points which does not form a complete locus (i.e., the two regions touch in a set of points which does not comprise a line segment, surface or volume); (vi) the surface of an ovate region touches the surface of some non-ovate region externally connected with it in a set of points which does not form a complete locus; (vii) any finite number of regions are included in some ovate region (i.e., there is a sufficiently large ovate region to *contain* any given finite number of regions); (viii) if A and B be any two ovate regions such that A includes B then there is an ovate region C such that A includes C and C includes B, and (ix) there are dissections of every ovate region which consist wholly of ovate regions, and, there are dissections which consist wholly or partly of non-ovate regions. The abstractive group of conditions are: (i) there are ovate abstractive sets among the members of any point; (ii) if any set of two, or of three, or of four, points be considered, there are ovate abstractive sets prime in reference to the condition of covering those points; and, there are sets of five points such that no ovate abstractive set is prime in reference to the condition of covering those points. Whitehead points out that by reason of the definitions of the abstractive group of conditions, the extensive continuum in question is four-dimensional. An extensive continuum of any number of dimensions can be defined analogously. Whitehead asks us to notice that the property of being dimensional is relative to a *particular* ovate class in the extensive continuum (emphasis ours): there may be ovate classes satisfying all the conditions except the dimensional conditions. He further informs that a continuum may have one number of dimensions relatively to one ovate class and another number of dimensions relatively to another ovate



class. Whitehead opines that the physical laws which presuppose continuity, possibly depend on the interwoven properties of two or more *distinct* ovate classes. (emphasis ours).

Whitehead assumes that there is at least one ovate class in the extensive continuum of the present epoch which has the two groups of characteristics enumerated above. He selects one such ovate class and says that all [further] definitions will be made relatively to the selected ovate class. He assures us that there being an alternative ovate class is immaterial to the argument; if there be such an other one, the derivative entities defined in reference to this alternative class are entirely different to those defined in reference to the selected class. He now presents the theorem which is going to help prove the uniqueness of a straight segment : if two abstractive sets are prime in reference to the same two-fold condition of covering a given group of points and of being equivalent to some ovate abstractive set, then the two abstractive sets are equivalent. He offers an elegant proof.<sup>2</sup> It follows as a corollary that all abstractive sets, prime with respect to the same two-fold condition of this type, belong to one geometrical element.

We now come to the definition of a straight segment. If two abstractive sets are prime in reference to the same two-fold condition of covering a given set of two points and of being equivalent to some ovate abstractive set, then two sets are equivalent and belong to one geometrical element : this geometrical element is called a straight segment. As can be readily seen, this definition itself shows the uniqueness of a straight segment. A similar definition is given of a flat geometrical element : instead of having two, we now have more than two, points. Whitehead observes that straight segments are also included under the designation of flat geometrical elements.



Realizing that it may so happen that the same geometrical element is definable by some sub-set as is defined by a given set of points, Whitehead offers a definition and a postulate to meet this difficulty. A set of points which defines a flat geometrical element is said to be in its lowest terms when it contains no sub-set defining the same flat geometrical element; and, no two sets of a finite number of points, both in their lowest terms, define the same geometrical element.

Whitehead defines a straight line between two given points as the locus of points incident in a straight segment between those points. (A straight segment between two given points was defined as a certain geometrical element. Now, a straight line between two points is being defined as a certain locus of points.) Similarly a flat locus is defined as the locus of points in a flat geometrical element. He relates a given flat locus with a section thereof through the assumption that if any sub-set of points lies in a flat locus, that sub-set too defines a flat locus contained within the given locus. Now a complete straight line is defined as a locus of points such that (i) the straight line joining any two members of the locus lies wholly within the locus, (ii) every sub-set in the locus, which is in its lowest terms, consists of a pair of points, and (iii) no points can be added to the locus without loss of one, or both, of the characteristics (i) and (ii).

Whitehead defines a triangle as the flat locus defined by three non-collinear points; these points are the angular points of the triangle. A plane is defined as a locus of non-collinear points such that (i) the triangle defined by any three non-collinear members of the locus lies wholly within the locus, (ii) any finite number of points in the locus lies in some triangle wholly contained in the locus, and (iii) no set of points can be added to the locus without loss of one, or both, of the charac-



teristics (i) and (ii). Similarly, a tetrahedron is the flat locus defined by four non-coplanar points which are the corners of the tetrahedron. We now come to the definition of a three dimensional flat space. It is a locus of non-coplanar points such that (i) the tetrahedron defined by any four non-coplanar points of the locus lies wholly within the locus, (ii) any finite number of points in the locus lies in some tetrahedron wholly contained in the locus, and (iii) no set of points can be added to the locus without the loss of one, or both, of the characteristics (i) and (ii).

## II

Does the method succeed in deriving the point from the region?

Professor Adolf Grünbaum answers this question in the negative on two grounds. According to Professor Grünbaum, (i) the convergence of the abstractive sets or classes is fatally ambiguous,<sup>3</sup> and (ii) Whitehead's method is vitiated by one of Zeno's arguments<sup>4</sup>

(1) Professor Grünbaum's first ground is valid in so far as Whitehead's earlier works, the *Enquiry* and the *Concept* are concerned. In those works, he had taken the expression 'A extends over B' to mean that B was a proper part of A. Now, if we take smaller and smaller (proper) parts of A as the members of an abstractive 'class', then, without appealing to the notions of a point, line, surface or volume, it cannot be determined as to what kind of an entity it is to which, e.g., to a point or a line, does a given abstractive 'class' converge. For example, if we take an event E and wish to take out parts of E to converge to a line, but take out parts  $E_1, E_2, E_3 \dots$  such that the 'surfaces' of  $E_1, E_2, E_3 \dots$  have one and only one point in common, then the abstractive 'class' so obtained cannot con-



verge to a line. Thus, to what an abstractive class converges was not determinable. Whitehead had done nothing to forestall this ambiguity of convergence. And this ambiguity was fatal to his Method, since it entirely depended on the notion of sameness of convergence. In his *Process and Reality*, Whitehead removed this ambiguity by distinguishing between tangential and non-tangential inclusion and basing the notion of an abstractive set on that of non-tangential inclusion or non-tangential whole-part relationship. No two members of an abstractive set can now have a common outer surface or a common line-segment or point on their outer surfaces.

However, Professor Grünbaum holds that the Method even as presented in *PR* is beset by ambiguity of convergence. He asks us to take two distinct but neighbouring points such as  $x=0$  and  $x=10^{-1000}$ . It is clear that there is a non-denumerable infinity of other points between the two chosen points. Now, Professor Grünbaum asks Whitehead to tell us (i) whether we know from sense perception that there exist two *different* abstractive classes defining those two points, and, if the answer be yes, to tell us (ii) as to precisely how their particular difference is certifiable by sense perception. Professor Grünbaum, it is submitted, does not see that a circularity is involved in his rhetorical question, and that he is raising an irrelevant issue. He first asks us to assume that *there are* two points and then demands that their difference should be certifiable by sense experience. To be able to demand that the difference between two points should be demonstrable in sense experience, he would have to point out two perceptible things which can be represented by  $x=0$  and  $x=10^{-1000}$ . If he would have succeeded in doing that, then Whitehead too would have succeeded in pointing to the perceptible difference between those two things. However, the point is that empiricism does not demand that everything we



talk about should be perceptible. It would suffice if what we talk about can be brought into some intelligible relation with what is observable in sense perception. Hence, it is not required that we should be able to distinguish between two such points in sense perception so long as some rational principle can be laid down for the purpose of distinguishing the one from the other. If it would have been the case that we are unable to distinguish between two abstractive sets of regions, A and B, converging respectively to points  $x=0$  and  $x=10^{-1000}$ , then indeed Whitehead's method would have been fatally ambiguous and would have been a total failure on that account. But we see that B would have members (in fact, infinitely many members) which do not contain point  $x=0$  (that is, some members of B would not include any region which is a member of some set of regions that would ordinarily be said to converge to point  $x=0$ ).

However, it seems to me that the convergence of the abstractive sets is ambiguous in one case, namely, in the case of a set that is supposed to converge to a region but which *may* only converge to a surface. That is to say, Whitehead does not provide a criterion to distinguish between those abstractive sets that would ordinarily be said to converge to a solid and those that would ordinarily be said to converge to a surface.

Let there be an abstractive set that would ordinarily be said to converge to a sphere  $s$ . Let point  $p$  be the centre of sphere  $s$ . Now take a large sphere  $R$  concentric with and containing  $s$ . Spherical parts of  $R$  having  $p$  as their centre and larger than  $s$  would then constitute an abstractive set converging to  $s$ . Let us call this abstractive set  $A$ . It is clear that  $s$  is not a member of  $A$ : if we construct a set having as members  $R, R_1, R_2, R_3, \dots$  such that  $p$  is the centre of each of these spheres and  $R_1$  is contained in  $R, R_2$  in  $R_1, R_3$  in  $R_2$ , and so on, and such that each



member is larger than  $s$ , then we have an infinite convergent series whose first member is  $R$  and  $s$  is in the nature of the *omega-plus-one*<sup>th</sup> term, i.e.,  $s$  is the 'limit' of this series. We now take another abstractive set of regions  $B$  such that every member of  $B$  contains some member of  $A$  and similarly every member of  $A$  contains some member of  $B$ . It follows that  $B$  must also converge to  $s$ , for, otherwise, some member of  $A$  would fail to contain any member of  $B$  or some member of  $B$  would fail to contain any member of  $A$ . *Equivalence* of two abstractive sets (in Whitehead's sense) ensures *sameness of convergence*. Now, our objection is that having chosen the abstractive set  $A$  (and, consequently, set  $B$  as well as the 'complete' group of abstractive sets equivalent to  $A$  and to one another and equivalent to no other abstractive set outside the given group), if we were to assume that sphere  $s$  does not exist—that is, if we assume that  $R$  is a hollow region—then Whitehead's method partially fails, for, now abstractive set  $A$  can only be said to converge to a surface, the surface of sphere  $s$ , but, Whitehead's method does not ensure that region  $R$  must not be hollow, Whitehead simply assumes that a region is not hollow. In other words, Whitehead should have made sure that something hollow cannot be taken to be a region but he failed to do so. However, this is not a crucial failure. The defect can be remedied by defining a gap and postulating that there are no gaps in any region. For example, Whitehead could have added two propositions at the end of section II (p. 420), as follows :

**Definition 9 A.** A region  $A$  is said to have no 'gap' in it when there are two regions  $B$  and  $C$  such that  $A$  and  $B$  are a dissection of  $C$ , and  $C$  includes  $B$  non-tangentially.

**Assumption 18 A.** By 'region' we shall henceforth mean a region that has no gap in it. This as-



sumption is merely a convenient arrangement of nomenclature.

It may moreover be pointed out that this was not a very important matter for Whitehead. For, his method was to jump from a (four-dimensional) region to a 'point' and build up a line, surface and solid from 'points'. A group of abstractive sets that is a 'point' can be unerringly distinguished from any other group that is another 'point' or is a line, surface or solid, which is what alone matters.

(2) According to Professor Grünbaum, Whitehead's method is vitiated by Zeno's mathematical paradox of plurality. The argument, in its details, is somewhat as follows :

Part of the edifice of contemporary mathematics rests on the conception that a spatial interval is literally composed of unextended point-elements. But, obviously, no finite set of point-elements can add up to a positive interval, and as argued by Zeno (and demonstrated by Professor Grünbaum), not even a denumerably infinite set of point-elements can constitute a positive interval. A positive interval can only be constituted by a non-denumerable infinite set of point-elements. For Whitehead, a point is a (complete) group of abstractive sets of regions. Hence, metrical consistency demands that there should be a non-denumerable infinity of (groups of) abstractive sets of regions. Now, Whitehead's programme of epistemological re-construction of geometry is that of beginning with something perceptible and by a process of abstraction arriving at things which are the termini of sense awareness. Hence, Whitehead's programme, in conjunction with the demand of metrical consistency, involves that there should be a non-denumerable infinity of abstractive sets and that these sets should be among the termini of sense awareness. Empiricists deny the existence of something actually infinite. Even if it is assumed that the existence of something



actually, but only denumerably, infinite is certifiable by sense awareness, it is evident that the notion of actually infinite sets having a cardinality exceeding *aleph-null*, i.e., the notion of non-denumerably infinite sets, would inexorably defy encompassment by the sensory imagination. Hence, Whitehead's empirical programme is seen to be at variance with the demand of metrical consistency.

Professor Grünbaum expects this argument to demolish both Whitehead's method in particular, and the empiricist's aspiration to reduce non-empirical notions to empirical ones in general. Insofar as the latter expectation is concerned, it is quite unjustified. In the first place, an epistemological reconstruction of geometry along empiricist lines would begin by removing from geometry the conception that supports part of the edifice of contemporary mathematics, viz., that an interval is constituted of magnitudeless elements. As such, no question of certifying the existence of a non-denumerable infinity of anything in sense experience or in anything else at all arises. In that case, the empiricists have of course to evolve points and instants, mass-points and particles, from phenomena that are perceptible, and would have to demonstrate that no illogicality was involved in such evolution. We believe that the empiricists' programme can be executed even though Whitehead may not have succeeded in evolving points from regions. (The notion of a point, we believe, is a rational notion. Hence, there must be a non-circular process through which human intellect arrived at the notion of a point. We have only to rediscover it consciously.) We are thus only left with the question of this argument's particular application to Whitehead.

Now, in relation to Whitehead, let it be noted that the argument involves both his derivation of the 'point' from the region and his derivation of the 'line', 'surface' and 'volume' from



'points'. Insofar as his derivation of the point is concerned, this does not involve non-denumerable infinity, at least directly. However, if spatial intervals are constituted as modern mathematicians suppose it to be constituted, then the 'complete' group of equivalent sets that is a geometrical element must have a non-denumerable infinity of members. But this should present no insurmountable difficulties since the abstractive sets would be overlapping in the sense that the member regions of one set would overlap with the members of the other sets. An abstractive set is not itself non-denumerably infinite, and, in fact, Whitehead asks us to think of them as a series of discrete members even though every one of them non-tangentially contains 'all' members coming after itself.

Insofar as Whitehead's derivation of the 'line' etc., from the 'points' is concerned, it is true that he does not explicitly lay it down that only a non-denumerable infinity of points can constitute a line-segment, surface of a region, or a region. But he does not lay it down either that a positive interval is constituted only of a denumerable infinity of 'points'. Rather, since he uses the expression 'all points' he may be taken to have supposed a complete locus of points to be constituted of a non-denumerable infinity of points. Hence, if it be correct that Prof. Grunbaum's view succeeds in meeting Zeno's argument in question, then Whitehead too may be taken to have succeeded in meeting Zeno's argument. As for the claim that the existence of a non-denumerable infinity of abstractive sets in sense awareness is impossible, I think, poses no problem for Whitehead, for, in sense awareness only finite number of regions would suffice to give rise to the supposition of non-denumerable infinity of abstractive sets. Moreover, as Professor Mays points out, it is by no means clear that Whitehead intended epistemological recon-

...2



struction of geometry along empiricist lines, and, as Nicod suggests, the Method may be considered after the fashion of an abstract mathematical model.<sup>5</sup> Had Whitehead had any such reconstruction at heart, he could hardly have tried to define lines, surfaces and volumes in terms of points. However, it is clear that he did not like to take the point as (intuitively) given and that he endeavoured to bring it into a rational relation with something sensible. Even so, this does not commit Whitehead to having a non-denumerable infinity of abstractive sets in perception.

In any popular exposition of Whitehead's method, it is inevitable that the words "point", "line", and "surface" should occur before his definitions thereof occur, just as we had to do earlier. (Whitehead himself found it necessary, in an aside, to talk of convergence to a point before he had defined the point.<sup>6</sup>) This leads to the objection that a circularity is involved in the method. But, the fact is that the apparent circularity is involved only in the exposition of the method, not in the method itself. The definition of a point given by Whitehead does not presuppose the notion of a point : a point is a geometrical element in which no other geometrical element is incident, or, in other words, a complete group of equivalent abstractive sets in which no other complete group of equivalent abstractive sets is incident. And, as argued by Broad and Stebbing, there is no circularity in popular expositions either, since 'convergence to a point' is itself understood in terms of regions and their relations.<sup>7</sup> (I am not happy with the actual defence though. But, we shall not argue this point since it relates only to popular expositions and not to Whitehead's method itself.)

### III

#### (i)

We submit however that Whitehead's method does not really



succeed in deriving the point from the region for the following reasons.

(1) Whitehead *either* unwarrantably presumes that an abstractive set does converge to a point, line, surface or region *or* abstractive sets fail to converge to a point, line etc.

We see that a given abstractive set  $A$  (consisting of concentric spheres having point  $p$  as their common centre) converges to  $p$ , but only because we know (or suppose that we know) that there are points and that points are contained in regions and that any given member region of  $A$  contains  $p$ . If we assume, for example, that there are no points, then set  $A$  will still converge as it did before, but now it will not converge to point  $p$ . Whitehead's postulates and definitions do not ensure that there must be points (in the ordinary sense of the word), it is simply assumed by us all that there are points, lines and other geometrical entities. In other words, Whitehead had endeavoured to derive point  $p$ , not circularly from an abstractive set converging to point  $p$ , but quite logically from the *sameness of convergence* of two converging sets of regions; but, in doing so, he failed to ensure that either of the two converging sets should converge to point  $p$ , that is, he failed to ensure that there was something to which either of the two sets converged. The circularity reappears in that Whitehead simply takes it for granted that region  $R$  (a member of set  $A$ ) cannot lack point  $p$  which will ordinarily be said to constitute its centre. He made no effort to ensure, without appealing to the notion of a point, that a point be contained in a region; he merely surrounded the intuitively apprehended point on all sides and assumed that the poor point could not run away from the surrounding region without seeing to it that his postulates and definitions which help surround the intuitively apprehended point ensure that it does not disappear.



This, however, is not a very effective argument. Whitehead could have said that he did *not* postulate the entities ordinarily called points, lines, etc., and that he had no use for them and that it sufficed for his purpose that two abstractive sets had *sameness of convergence* even though neither converged to anything. If Professor Grünbaum were to insist that this would affect the continuity of the continuum, that if there were no surfaces, lines and points (as we understand these terms) then there would only be discrete regions, then Whitehead could say that he did not have to begin by assuming that spatio-temporal continua were continuous in the sense of there being boundaries between regions and that it would suffice for his purpose if regions were continuous in the sense that regions were contiguous and had no gaps in them. What is important for Whitehead is that the 'point' as defined by him does all the work that a point is required to do in geometry. However, it seems to me that (apart from the question whether Whitehead's point can do for our point) the fact that two abstractive sets have sameness of convergence but neither can be said to converge to anything (without already assuming that there are points, lines and surfaces and thus begging the question) presents at least an infelicity. (And this infelicity turns into perplexity when in popular expositions 'convergence to a point' etc., is glibly mentioned : convergence to a point *or* 'convergence' to a complete group of equivalent abstractive sets in which no such other group is incident, and if the latter then what does 'convergence to a certain group of abstractive sets' mean ?)

Whitehead also appeals to the fact that abstractive sets have different kinds of convergence : some converge to a region, some to a surface, some to a line, and only some to a point. But differences in the nature of convergence can be apprehended only when a point, line and surface has already been defined. If we



do not know what a point, line or surface is, and we are not supposed to know it till points, lines and surfaces have been defined, then we only see that, as we proceed toward the regions included in the earlier regions, the members of the abstractive set are becoming smaller, we have no means of discovering that some abstractive sets are converging to a region while others are converging to a surface, line or point. Thus, in appealing to the fact that abstractive sets have different kinds of convergence, Whitehead's method involves a circularity.

(2) Whitehead's definition of a point as a *complete* group of equivalent abstractive sets is necessary but impossible.

The qualification of completeness is necessary because otherwise it would have been possible that a given group of equivalent abstractive sets is point  $p$  and another group of equivalent abstractive sets is point  $q$  but the members of  $p$  and  $q$  are equivalent and, hence, either a distinction would have to be drawn between the two groups, which seems impossible, or a rule would have to be laid down that  $p$  and  $q$  are the same, which in effect would amount to the completeness of the group.

The qualification of completeness is impossible because no group of equivalent abstractive sets can be complete. It is evident that no finite collection of equivalent abstractive sets can be complete, since no matter how many such sets have been taken, there will still be some other set which is equivalent to each member of the collection but is not itself a member of this collection. The reason is that space is *ex hypothesi* infinitely divisible and hence given any two equivalent abstractive sets there is a third which is equivalent to both and in a sense lies between them. (Suppose we take set  $S_1 = R_1, R_2, R_3, \dots, R_n, \dots$ , and set  $S_2 = E_1, E_2, E_3, \dots, E_n, \dots$ , such that  $R_1$  contains  $E_1$  and  $E_1$  contains  $R_1$ , and so on. Then there is an abstractive set  $S_3 = F_1, F_2, F_3, \dots$  such that  $R_1$  contains  $F_1$ ,  $F_1$  contains  $E_1$ , and



$E_1$  contains  $R_2$ , and so on.) This means that given any abstractive set  $S$ , there are infinitely many abstractive sets that are equivalent to  $S$ . But there can be no infinite group or collection of anything, i. e., no determinate collection or group of anything can be infinite. (This point will be elaborated later in connection with the question whether 'an infinite set of points' has any meaning; please see sub-section ii.)

(3) Whitehead's 'point' does not answer to what we call a point.

We may not be able to state what we mean by the word "point" beyond what has been said by Euclid, but, I believe, we all mean the same thing (otherwise there would have been no geometry), and certainly what we mean by this word is not a complete group of equivalent abstractive sets of regions in which no other such group is incident (and whose member sets would ordinarily be said to converge to a point). C. D. Broad says that we must not be aghast at finding that the point had turned out to be different from what we had expected it to be.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, if we had supposed a ball to be made of iron and on analysis found out that it was made of silver, or we supposed the ball to be spherical and found out that it was oblong, then we ought not to be aghast at our finding. But, here we do not begin by assuming that the point is given and on analysis is discovered to be different from what we had expected it to be. Here, we believe we know what a point is and if we find that we are being presented with something different then we can at least say, "Well, your 'point' is different from ours". The crucial test here, as Broad rightly observes, is to see if Whitehead's 'point' can do for our point, and, we see that we cannot replace the *definiendum* (the ordinary word "point") in geometrical sentences by the *definiens* of Whitehead's definition of a point ('a geometrical element in which no other element is incident').



This point may be seen in connection with Whitehead's definition of being situated in a region. It is for us a truism that a point is situated in a region. But we do not comprehend what is meant when we are told that a certain group of equivalent abstractive sets of regions is said to be 'situated' in a region when that region is a member of one of the abstractive sets which compose that group of equivalent abstractive sets. Shorn of its technicalities, the definition tells us that a group of abstractive sets of region is *situated* in any region which is a member of any of the abstractive sets of regions included in the group in question. We feel that 'to be situated in a region' as used by Whitehead does not mean what we mean when we say that a point is situated in a region. The gulf between the two usages appears to widen when a complete group of equivalent abstractive sets of regions is said by Whitehead to be situated in the *surface* of a region which is a member of one of the given abstractive sets of regions.

In short, a group of abstractive sets of regions is *not* a point (as ordinarily conceived) but merely a *route* or *pointer* to a point. It is unquestionably a better route or pointer than any that we have hitherto had, for example, better than the attempt to arrive at a point by dividing and subdividing a region. All the same, a group of abstractive sets is only a pointer or route to a point, not a point in itself. This, Whitehead had himself conceded in an earlier work, when he said :

There is no one event which the series [ of events forming an abstractive class ] marks out, but the series itself is a route of approximation towards an ideal simplicity of content.<sup>9</sup>

A route of approximation towards an ideal simplicity of 'content' it is submitted, is not itself an ideal simplicity of content.



We may put this argument as follows. If we knew what the word 'point' meant and were looking for point  $p$  then Whitehead's method would unerringly take us to point  $p$  and to no other point. That is, if we were in search of a route to  $p$  then nothing I know of could provide a better route to  $p$  than this method, for, it is by taking  $p$  as the point of departure that the group of abstractive sets has been arrived at.

However, if we are innocent of the notion of a point then despite guiding us towards point  $p$  by making sure that we do not chance wander on to any other point or to anything else of a different nature such as a line, Whitehead's method completely fails in yielding a point. What we have is a set of overlapping regions which become smaller and smaller indefinitely, and beckon a person wise to the situation towards  $P$  and leave an ignoramus like myself greatly baffled.

To sum it up, if we had to *represent* a point by something so that we could retain the distinction between points  $p_1$  and  $p_2$ , then groups of equivalent abstractive sets could be used for this purpose: the distinction would be retained in as much as group  $g_2$  cannot lead to  $p_1$ , nor can group  $g_1$  lead to  $p_2$ ,  $g_1$  being a route of approximation to  $p_1$  and  $g_2$  being a similar route to  $p_2$ . But if we desired to have something *equivalent* to what we call a point, or, what is the same, if we desired to learn what the word 'point' *means*, then the expression 'a complete group of equivalent abstractive sets of regions in which no other group of equivalent abstractive sets of regions is incident' is *not* equivalent to the word 'point', it does not tell us what a point really is. If so, Whitehead fails to *define* a point, and, *a fortiori*, fails to derive the point from the region.

(4) Whitehead jumps from the (four dimensional) region to the point directly instead of deriving the surface from a region, a line from a surface, and a point from a line.



*Whitehead's Method of Extensive Abstraction*

If Whitehead would have succeeded in deriving the point from the region then this objection would have been pointless, although, even in that case, it would have pointed out an aesthetic infelicity.

If fine, we see that inspite of taking advantage of the infelicity of jumping directly from the region to the point and of having sameness of convergence without there being a convergence to, Whitehead fails to find a non-circular method for defining the point.

(ii)

In addition, it may be pointed out, Whitehead's method fails to derive the line from the point.

Insofar as the derivation of the line, surface and volume is concerned, there is no difference between Whitehead and modern mathematicians—both derive the line, surface and volume from the point—and the arguments which can be urged against the one can be urged against the other.

(1) First of all, it seems strange that a magnitudinous whole should consist of magnitudeless parts. This difficulty is overcome by distinguishing between 'components' and 'constituents'.<sup>10</sup> Even so, it seems strange that a set of things each one of which is of zero magnitude should give rise to something that has positive magnitude.

Strange though it seems, this is what the mathematicians, Dedekind and Cantor in particular, are supposed to have succeeded in doing. If  $S$  be a set of points such that for any value of  $x$ , if  $x$  is a point on line segment  $l$  then  $x$  is a member of  $S$  and if there is no  $x$  such that  $x$  is a member of  $S$  but does not lie in  $l$ , then the members of  $S$  ordered in the manner they occur in  $l$ , would be equivalent to  $l$ . Thus, all we need to do to dissolve the line-segment into a set of points is to find a set which has



the property of set  $S$ . Now suppose that the line segment  $l$  is of the length of one centimetre. Let  $p_0$  be the first point of  $l$ , and  $p_1$  be the last point of  $l$ . Now, any point  $p_n$  on  $l$  can be defined in terms of its distance from  $p_0$ ; e.g., if  $p_n$  is at a distance of 0.4 centimetres then we represent it by  $p_{.4}$ . However, this is not sufficient to derive the line. We have to determine the relations that subsist between the points when they form a line. Dedekind and Cantor, therefore, endeavoured to determine what characteristics the supposed set of points  $S$  has. Now, the first characteristic of points is that no two points are consecutive. So, no two members of  $S$  may be consecutive if set out in the order of increasing (or decreasing) magnitude of their subscripts. Secondly, every point is an end-point of some sub-segment of  $l$ , and every sub-segment of  $l$  is such that an omega-sequence of points can be obtained having as its 'limit' the end-point of that sub-segment. So, every sub-set of  $S$  must contain a progression of members and the limits of such progression must be members of the set  $S$ . Thirdly, if  $p_m$  and  $p_n$  be any two members of  $S$  and if  $m$  and  $n$  be rational numbers, then there must be a member of  $S$ , say  $p_r$ , such that  $r$  is an irrational number greater than  $m$  and smaller than  $n$ , and conversely, if  $m$  and  $n$  are irrational numbers, then there must be a  $p_r$  such that  $r$  is a rational number greater than  $m$  and smaller than  $n$ . Given these conditions, to run through the members of  $S$  in the ascending order of magnitudes would be tantamount to running through  $l$  from  $p_0$  to  $p_1$ .<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the objection seems to have been overcome: we see how a line having a positive magnitude can be dissolved into points, or if you like, how can magnitudeless points give rise to a line.

However, it seems to me that the line is not done away with completely. Of course, the obvious objection that each point was



defined in terms of its distance from a given point and that no definition of 'distance' in terms of points alone had been given, would be based on a mistake. In order to show that a line can be analysed in terms of points, the points were initially defined in terms of distances, but once we see that an equivalence can be established between set *S* and line *l*, we can take the points independently, of distances and in themselves: if the members of *S* have three characteristics given above they give rise to a continuum of points. However, no rule appears to have been given to distinguish between the lengths of two continua of points. That is, since any continuum of points has a non-denumerable infinity of points, their magnitudes cannot be differentiated by the number of points. Indeed, in some cases, magnitudes of continua can be differentiated, e.g. where one is a part of the other, but, even in such cases, the ratios between the two can be worked out only by taking some continuum as the unit of comparison, which in effect means that some line-segment, in itself and quite independently of the points supposedly constituting it, would be adopted as the unit of measurement.

(2) Moreover, there is a more fundamental objection to the mathematicians' position, viz., that there is no set of terms which could be the set *S*, or in other words, that 'set *S*' is not a 'set of terms' but a formula for generating terms, and a formula which is in principle incapable of yielding any given set of terms. We have argued this point elsewhere;<sup>12</sup> here we shall content ourselves with presenting a summary of our arguments.

(i) Since lines and periods of time, on this view, are nothing but sets or series of points and moments, whatever be the state of affairs, the interval must be capable of being given in terms of points and moments. But we find an insurmountable difficulty in doing that. Even in relation to points and moments themselves we are beset with the difficulty of accounting for the end-



points (and every point or moment is an end-point). If we divide a set (or rather series) into two halves, do we take a certain point or moment in both the sub-sets or in neither of the sub-sets or in one but not in the other sub-set? If we take it (a moment) in both the sub-sets, then we may have to concede that, e.g., a body is both green and is not green at that moment. If we take it as being a member of neither sub-set, then there will be no last moment of being green and no first moment of being non-green, and, at the moment in question the body would neither be green nor not be green. If we take this moment as a member of one of the sub-sets, then, firstly, either there will be no last moment of being green or no first moment of not being green; and secondly, it will become a matter of arbitrary choice as to which of the two alternatives is chosen in a given instance.

Perhaps, the only way of meeting this objection is to claim that we start with wrong data—the body cannot be said to be green during a sub-period unless we know during what set of moments it is green; if it is green at moments  $m_1$  to  $m_n$  then it is green during period  $t_1$  such that  $t_1 = \{m_1 \dots m_n\}$ , but if it is green at moment  $m_1$  and every moment before  $m_n$  but not at  $m_n$  then we would say that the body is green at moments  $m$  such that  $m_1 \leq m < m_n$  ('<' meaning 'is before' and ' $\leq$ ' meaning 'is the same as or before').

But the problem will not get resolved. In the first place, there will still be cases in which there will be no last moment or no first moment of being in a given state, for, two consecutive periods cannot have a common moment and no two moments are consecutive. Moreover, in the case of motion, if a body must be motionless at any and every moment (since it cannot traverse any distance in a moment) then it would seem a little strange that the body is not invariably at rest during a set of



moments. In the second place, it seems unreasonable to suppose that a body can be in any state in a durationless moment.

(ii) That what we have called 'set S' cannot be a *collection* of terms is quite clear, since an 'infinite collection' is a contradiction in terms.

But 'set S' cannot be a *class* of terms either. It is true that the word 'class' is ordinarily used quite ambiguously so that we have both a defining property and the terms which have that property. And it is this practice which has given rise to the problem of universals. We are here using the word differently. We are so using the word that a given aggregation of terms each of the same sort or kind constitutes a collection and not a class, so that a class can stand in relation only to other classes and cannot be said to have an  $n$  number of members no matter what  $n$  may be and no matter how many entities be known to have the defining property of the given class. Moreover, the property that defines a class must be general and must not in any manner be restricted. That is, restriction on a class must come only from an additional qualification being imposed which must itself be general. Thus, there can be a class of animals and a class of points, but there cannot be a class of animals living in Pakistan or a class of animals existing in the 19th century; similarly there can be no class of points lying in this solid or that line-segment. For, 'living in Pakistan' or 'lying in that line-segment' are not general attributes or properties. If so, there can be no such class as the class of points between points  $p_m$  and  $p_n$ .

Let us suppose that 'set' means something different from a collection and a class. What will the expression 'all the members of S' now mean? If S would have been a collection, it would have meant ' $x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots, x_n$ ' but S is not a collection. If S would have been a class it would have meant the whole class to



the exclusion of on sub-class, but  $S$  is not a class. What then can the expression in question signify? To me, it signifies nothing except the obstinate desire to do the impossible—to derive the line from the point.

(iii) Finally, it appears to me that mathematicians took the wrong course in relating the line and the point: it is the point which is to be derived from the line and not the line from the point. Mathematicians thus not only reify the point, they completely fail to understand the nature of a point. A point is a potential division of a line just as a line is a potential division of a surface, and a surface that of a solid. To talk of all the points of 1 is thus to talk of all the division of 1, and to equate a set of points with 1 is to equate a set of division of 1 with 1 and to hold that line-segment 1 is nothing but all the divisions of 1. In a sense, the equation is true. If there is such a thing as 'all the divisions of 1' then no matter how disparate the category of 'divisions' and 'line-segments' may *prima facie* appear to be, nothing would be left in 1 if all its possible divisions were obtained. However, 'all the divisions of 1', though it very much looks like 'all the boys in this room' has at best the same status as 'all men' and any attribute predicated of it must be analytic, i.e. the predicate must be a component of the complex of defining properties. But when we claim that 'all the divisions of 1 are given' then 'being given' does not at all seem to be a property of 'the class of divisions of 1' (even assuming it to be a class).

(iii)

Furthermore, Whitehead fails to define a straight segment. He defines a straight segment in terms of, *inter alia*, an 'ovate' abstractive set which he has not been able to define.

Whitehead begins by mentioning what he calls an 'oval' region and contrasts it with a non-oval region in a very vague



and ambiguous fashion. He claims that it is *evident* that two (as yet undefined) oval regions *can* only overlap with unique intersection. I do not profess to understand what he means. In the literal sense of the word, a region would be called oval if it had the shape of an egg, and a region which did not have this shape for example, a sphere, an obelisque or a pyramid, would be called a non-oval region. If so, why two oval and not two non-oval regions should overlap with unique intersection is by no means evident to me. Whitehead further say that any non-oval region overlaps some oval regions with multiple intersection, from which it appears as if some oval regions may not overlap any non-oval region with multiple intersection. Even so, we fail to have any definite idea of an oval region or of the distinction between an oval and a non-oval region.

Whitehead holds that a class of ovals can be defined although a single oval cannot be defined. It is submitted that this expression is logically inappropriate. An individual can be described, possibly, exhaustively described, but cannot be defined. A class of things can be defined but if a class is defined then every individual which belongs to that class can be distinguished from any other individual not belonging to that class. The cat called Pussey cannot be defined, it can only be described; the class of cats can be defined, which only means that cat-ness or the properties which a thing must possess in order to qualify to be called a cat can be exhaustively enumerated. Thus, if it were possible to define a class of ovals, then it would be possible to say what an oval was. But, Whitehead, in saying that a single oval cannot be defined, meant to say that it was not possible to state what characteristics a region must possess to be called an oval. If so, in a logically proper sense, it was not possible to define the class of ovals. Thus, we may take it that in claiming that the class of ovals was definable, what Whitehead really meant to say was



that without defining the terms 'oval' and 'non-oval' a set of protocol propositions could be laid down stating relations between these terms which could lead us to divine in what senses the two terms might have been used.

Whitehead further confuses the issue by saying, "...we cannot define a single oval, but we can define a class of ovals. Such a class will be called 'ovate'". At first sight, this decision seems to be senseless : why not persevere with the term 'oval', why bring in yet another undefined term ? But, on reflection, we see that Whitehead is not using the word "class" to mean things of the same kind in general, i.e., things having common characteristics whether or not there actually be a thing having the characteristics in question—in short, in a sense in which the notion of a null class is not a contradiction in terms. Hence, it would seem that by "ovate" he means that group of ovals which can be defined. This makes sense, but makes the notion of an oval even more confusing and out of our reach.

Coming to the ovate 'class', what Whitehead does is to tell us what relations two ovate regions must bear to one another, what relations an ovate region must bear to some non-ovate region, what relations a non-ovate region must bear to some ovate region, and that there are ovate abstractive sets. This is indeed no way of defining what an ovate region is. But, let us try to see what picture of an ovate region emerges from the protocol propositions.

First of all, an ovate region is not necessarily oval in shape. For, a sphere satisfies both the abstractive and non-abstractive conditions laid down by Whitehead. Going over the conditions of the two groups, we came to the conclusion that what Whitehead may have had in mind is what we may call a 'regular' region, i.e., a region bounded by a 'regular' surface and com-



prehending all that lies within that surface. In other words, a region having a surface free from all protuberances and depressions and whose interior is free from all gaps or hollowness. We arrive at this conclusion from the fact that two regular regions; neither of the two having any protuberance or depression, can overlap only in a single, continuous stretch, whereas a regular region with some non-regular region and a non-regular region with some regular region must overlap with multiple intersection. And the surfaces of any two regular regions must meet either in a point or in a continuous set of points, that is, in a line or a surface, whereas a regular surface and some irregular surface, and, similarly, an irregular surface and some regular surface, must meet in a non-continuous set of points, i.e., in a group of points which do not by themselves form a line or a surface.

Although we cannot be definite that this is what Whitehead must have meant by an ovate region, I feel that we cannot be far wrong in our belief, for, for purposes of extensive abstraction the notion of a regular region is indispensable. Hence, we may at least tentatively assume that by an ovate region Whitehead must have meant a regular four-dimensional region.

Now, if Whitehead did really mean by an ovate region what we have designated a regular region, then it is all too clear that, instead of endeavouring to determine the essential properties of a regular region and defining a regular region in terms of those properties, Whitehead only seized upon two characteristics of pairs of regular/irregular regions/surfaces, namely, those of unique/multiple intersection and of intersecting in a group of points forming/not forming a line or surface, and tried to 'define' the regular region in terms of these two non-essential characteristics of pairs of regular/irregular regions/surfaces, i. e., characteristics



tics which cannot be used to define the term 'a regular region', for, these properties characterize *relations* between two regions/surfaces, and, consequently, an ovate, region.

Thus, even though Whitehead's definition of a straight segment is such that the uniqueness of a straight segment is immediately deducible from the definition itself, which is clearly an improvement on the traditional treatment, this definition does not succeed in defining a straight segment since Whitehead had not succeeded in defining an ovate region even if he is regarded as having succeeded in telling us what he meant by an 'ovate' region. (It is to be noted that although our description of a regular region as 'a region whose surface is free from all protuberances and depressions and whose interior is free from all gaps or hollowness' seems quite clear and intelligible, if the notion of a point has not already been defined, means nothing. To become meaningful, the words 'protuberance', 'depression', 'gap' or 'hollowness' will have to be defined without resorting to the notion of a point. When we try to do so, we find it very difficult even to distinguish between the surface and the interior of a region ! )

#### (iv)

Since, in our opinion, Whitehead has failed to derive the line-segment from the point and to define a straight segment, it follows that he has failed to derive the surface and volume from the point and has failed to define a plane.

#### IV

Now that we come to the conclusion that Whitehead's method of extensive abstraction did not succeed in deriving the point, and the line and the surface, from the region (the latter two via the point), or in defining a straight line or a flat surface, must we regard this method as a historical curiosity, as yet



*Whitehead's Method of Extensive Abstraction*

another instance of an aberration of the kind human mind affords ample evidence of being prone to ? I think that the answer is an emphatic "no".

Solutions of most philosophical problems have only been possible by the trial-and-error method after many false leads had been thoroughly worked through. When, finally, a definitive solution is arrived at, all the earlier attempts at solution are seen to be complements of the actual solution without which such a solution could hardly have been possible. Even though a failure in the ultimate analysis, the very fact that such an attempt was made is in itself of immense value. In attempting to derive the point from the region, Whitehead's method is on the right track : we are certainly not born with the notion of a point, and, hence, it is obvious that we acquire it by some such sub-conscious process as Whitehead's method. The final solution of this problem will be arrived at by the same rigorous logical method of beginning with a few undefined notions embedded in sense perception and a few universally acceptable axioms.

It is clear that the notions of tangential and non-tangential inclusion will prove helpful in any attempt at extensive abstraction. If the notions of point, line and surface are not given, then to be able to ensure that a given region is a plenum—i. e., to ensure that a given outer surface encloses the entire region which would ordinarily be taken as enclosed within it—the notion of non-tangential inclusion will be found to be of crucial importance.

The method of rigorous deduction, though not new with Whitehead, is of the greatest value and the only logical method for the derivation of the point from the interval. In relation to extensive abstraction, Whitehead's was the pioneering endeavour and will ever be a beacon to all those who might attempt extensive abstraction in the future.



Whitehead's procedure in defining a straight segment, that is, in offering a definition which shows the straight segment's uniqueness among the line-segments bounded by two given points was a wonderful attempt and one cannot but wish that it had succeeded. Whitehead had taken the property of being the shortest distance as the crucial defining property without falling a prey to the circularity involved in other attempts to define the notion of a straight line. It is clear that if the concept of straightness is ever to be caught hold of in a non-circular definition, that definition will have to be such that either the property of being the shortest distance between two points can be immediately deduced from the definition or the concept of being the shortest distance between two points can be defined with the help of the defined notion of a straight segment.

In short, we owe a debt of gratitude to Whitehead for his having attempted to derive the point by extensive abstraction from a datum which was a deliverance of the only primary source of human knowledge. sense perception.

A/13, Street 4, Block N  
North Nazimabad  
KARACHI (Pakistan)

F. A. SHAMSI

#### NOTES

1. In his preface (written in 1914) to *Our Knowledge of the External World* (first published in 1914, revised in 1926) Russell says that he owed his definition of points and the treatment of instants to Whitehead and that what he had said on those topics in that book was in fact a rough preliminary account of the more precise results which Whitehead was giving in the fourth volume of their *Principia Mathematica*. I have not been able to consult this book. However, it is almost certain that



Whitehead's exposition of his Method in that book must have been about the same as he has given in the first two works listed here. (But at p. 119 of the 1961 reprint of the revised edition, Russell only mentions the *Enquiry* and the *Concept* in this connection. Moreover, Professor W. Mays, in his book, *The Philosophy of Whitehead*, 1959, reprint, New York, 1962, devotes a chapter to the Method of Extensive Abstraction, pp. 115-25, but makes no mention of the *Principia* in connection with the Method.)

2. At p. 432, however, he says that regions M and N intersect instead of saying that M and N overlap. (To overlap has been defined but not 'to intersect'. An 'intersect' has been defined, but from its definition one cannot go on to 'to intersect'.
3. "Whitehead's Method of Extensive Abstraction", *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, IV, No. 15 (1953), pp. 215-26; See, pp. 219-26.
4. "Whitehead's Method", pp. 216-19 and 222-26.
5. *Philosophy of Whitehead*, pp. 118-19. (Prof. Mays only says that "Whitehead does not always make it clear whether his method is to be taken as an algorithm or as an exact description of some actual process of convergence". He further says that "Nicod... suggested that Whitehead's contribution could be taken as the construction of a pure geometry rather than as an analysis of the real World".
6. E. g., *Process and Reality*, p. 421.
7. C. D. Broad, *Scientific Thought*, reprint, London 1952, pp. 45-47; L. S. Stebbing, *A Modern Introduction to Logic*, reprint, London, 1958, pp. 446-52, esp. pp. 450-51.
8. *Scientific Thought*, p. 43.
9. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge*, reprint, Cambridge, 1955, p. 104. In the *Concept of Nature* (reprint, Cambridge, 1971), Whitehead says, 'Thus an abstractive element is the group of routes of approximation to a definite intrinsic character of ideal simplicity to be found as a limit among natural facts.'
10. C. D. Broad, *Scientific Thought*, p. 330.
11. R. Dedekind, *Essays on the Theory of Numbers* (tr. W. W. Beman), New York: Dover, n.d., esp. pp. 3-21; G. Cantor, *Contributions to the Founding of the Theory of Transfinite Numbers* (tr. P. E. B. Jourdain), New York, 1915.
12. "Infiniter-atomicity", *The Pakistan Philosophical Journal*, XIII, no. 3 (October 1975), pp. 47-84, and XIV, no. 2 (Jan.-June 1976), pp. 34-72.



## INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATIONS

Daya Krishna and A. M. Ghose ( eds ) Contemporary  
Philosophical Problems : Some Classical Indian Persp-  
ectives, Rs. 10/-

S. V. Bokil ( Tran ) Elements of Metaphysics Within the  
Reach of Everyone, Rs. 25/-

A. P. Rao, Three Lectures on John Rawls, Rs. 10/-

Ramchandra Gandhi ( ed ) Language, Tradition and Modern  
Civilization, Rs. 50/-

S. S. Barlingay, Beliefs, Reasons and Reflections, Rs. 70/-

Daya Krishna, A. M. Ghose and P. K. Srivastav ( eds )  
The Philosophy of Kalidas Bhattacharyya, Rs. 60/-

M. P. Marathe, Meena A. Kelkar and P. P. Gokhale ( eds )  
Studies in Jainism, Rs. 50/-

R. Sundara Rajan, Innovative Competence and Social  
Change, Rs. 25/-

S. S. Barlingay ( ed ), A Critical Survey of Completed  
Research Work in Philosophy in Indian Universities  
( upto 1980 ), Part I, Rs. 50/-

R. K. Gupta, Exercises in Conceptual Understanding, Rs. 25/-

Vidyut Aklujkar, Primacy of Linguistic Units, Rs. 30/-

**Contact :** The Editor,

Indian Philosophical Quarterly

Department of Philosophy

University of Poona,

Poona-411 007.



## RICHARD RORTY'S METAPHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENT

### 1. *The path to Deconstruction*

What happens when philosophy makes an 'upward revision' or it becomes metaphilosophical, in exactly the same way as science does? <sup>1</sup> Will it be possible for us to get an integrated view of human rationality, once the existence of paradigms <sup>2</sup> in philosophy is affirmed to be true? These are the two important questions around which much of the deconstructive programme of Rorty takes shape. While Rorty wants to play down the answer to the first, by simply denying the very possibility of a coherent metaphilosophical discourse, he seeks to endorse the answer to the second question by evoking an ideal of integrated rationality. The way he achieves it is by advancing what is called a textualist case for deconstruction of philosophy understood as a professional discipline (*Fach*), and by nominating 'literature' as the successor discipline. In my understanding, Rorty's programme does not succeed to present a convincing case for deconstruction as there is an obvious contradiction between the two answers. Rorty may try to justify his programme by calling attention to the view that philosophy has lost its 'archimedean' role assigned to it by Kant in his own meta-enquiry, but in the end, he ends up by Kantianising his own, that is by trying to delimit the metaphilosophical discourse itself.

What I want to show here is that there are a number of stages in his enquiry that force him to apply the idea of deconstruction, but he does not succeed because in the end he replaces

Received : 23-6-88



it with his own alternative paradigm, which is supposed to supercede the systematic philosophy of the past. In other words, his textualist case does not succeed beyond saying that it is yet another search for an alternative vocabulary a sort of 'neo-pragmatism' so to speak, thrusting its way forward through romantic pathways, to reach the terminus of Post-philosophical culture. (159) This is what in brief one gathers from his two titles.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. *From Dissolution to Deconstruction*

For Rorty, therefore, the question about the coherence of metaphilosophical discourse has to be tackled at a number of levels, each of which represents an important feature of his own discourse. I shall identify at least four of these features below. To begin with the most prominent of them, namely the therapeutic side, in which the metaphilosophical discourse is supposed to determine the ways of dissolving philosophical problems, in the way it has been recommended by later Wittgenstein. For Rorty, the historicist message of later Wittgenstein is interpreted to consist of dismantling the very foundations of philosophy, thus extending the Quinean or Sellarsian 'no-foundations argument' to a step further so as to dismantle the very structure of professional philosophy. This must be the dialectics of analytical philosophy on Rorty's view, even if it involves the squeezing out its 'pragmatic' turn. On the contrary, its Kantian limits are determined by the non-pragmatic conversation of mankind.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. *Philosophy Vs. Anti-philosophy*

The second feature follows from the first in that it turns such a mode of enquiry into an philosophical one, though it has its roots in pragmatism for the very reason that such an anti-philosophical stance itself is a direct consequence of pragmatism. It becomes somewhat clear that the pragmatist's search for a viable logic of enquiry should constitute one of the earliest



phases of the dialectics of analytical philosophy. Later, however, it acquired its synthetic character of pragmatism. Likewise, Rorty's paradigm of philosophy too acquires its synthetic character, at least in three important ways, each of which is of comparable interest to pragmatism. Firstly, his vision of conversation aims to steer clear off the lead of concrete reasonableness sans blockages, for the very reason that it does not manifest the constraints immanent to it. Second, it trades on the unifying character of the two poles of human rationality, while at the same time avoiding the metaphysical tangles caused by truth as correspondence, and truth as coherence, fact and value, or morality and science, thus showing its positive merit of resolving these issues in the manner of Jamesian unification of the tender and tough-minded, for example. Thirdly, by taking the Deweyan vision of the unity between the Lockean naturalism and Hegelian 'upbeat' historicism as not too radical enough, it tries to demonstrate that they all looked at the possibility of alternative conceptual schemes as something caused by the increasing 'pragmatisation of analytical philosophy'. (8 and 13) In summary, though the synthetic character is recognised to be one of the important consequences of pragmatism, it is not the best. One way of superceding this is to take the unity of two paradigms of rational enquiry, namely explanation and understanding. This does not strike true as it is the synthetic character which blocks any deconstruction.

#### 4. *The Synthetic Character of Deconstruction*

On Rorty's view, it is this synthetic character of science and philosophy that demands the introduction of hermeneutics. Consequently, this should be marked off as the third important feature of Rorty's metaphilosophical discourse, but yet with a curcial difference. The difference consists first in the rejection of hermeneutics as a method, while at the same time introducing



it as a successor subject to epistemology. Secondly, hermeneutics should be understood in a 'polemical' sense (357) in which it is identifiable with the species of criticism. Apart from the strain it shows with the textualist assumption, Rorty pleads for a sense of hermeneutics that should take the role of skepticism for the very reason that it is yet another species of criticism. How far this feature could be reconciled with the metaphilosophical discourse needs a little explanation. Endorsing the synthesis made by Apel<sup>5</sup> by mediating them, Rorty holds the distinction between the 'causal-explanatory' and 'interpretative human' sciences as one between hermeneutics (normal) and epistemological (abnormal) interests. This is again seen as a consequence of commensurating and incommensurating paradigms. Now Rorty thinks that it is a mistake to think of them as competing paradigms, and says that they only 'help each other out' (347). Therefore, each is right in what they say, not for Apelian semiotical reasons, but for Taylorian hermeneutical reasons. In his later book on *Consequences of Pragmatism*, they are treated as merely stylistic variants so as to drive home the point that Dilthey was wrong in his understanding of the cleavage.

A further point of the synthetic character is seen in his taking the two traditions of American naturalism and the continental hermeneutics as two proto-paradigms, and assuming that the former's attempt to reduce human sciences to scientific categories, and the latter's resistance to it, are not as irreconcilable as they are often thought to be, to prove that they have potentiality for synthesis. Besides the question-begging character of the above, Rorty wants to maintain their unique character, and it follows, therefore, the synthesis appears to be a misnomer. The reason for maintaining this is that he wants philosophy not to become a 'hand-maiden' or 'underlabourer' for science.



This becomes no less explicit than in his account of textualism, which he regards as invariably antagonistic to science. Now, clubbing this along with the trait to suspect the philosophical enterprises, he wants to reach the conclusion that philosophy has lost its pristine colour, and it must give up its place to literature. This is briefly the conceptual historiography he presents. Even the 'legal' image of the post-positivistic philosophy, on his reading, has nothing more to offer, than what could equally be offered either by literature or by history.<sup>6</sup>

At times, Rorty gives the impression that the two traditions he has in mind roughly correspond to 'existentialism' and 'analytical philosophy' which are therefore understood to lead respectively to a non- and a neo-Kantian paradigms respectively. Both are detestable. The Jamesian impulse to 'pragmatise' the apparently conflicting paradigms is to be curbed, because that tradition is not to be perpetuated.<sup>7</sup> Hence, one must compensate it with the introduction of structural elements of the history of analytical philosophy. I suggest that one should interpret Rorty's paradigmatic expressions like 'mind' and 'language' only in the above way. This is radically different from the structuralist elements one finds in Derrida, who fulminates a particular paradigm of Philosophy namely the speech-act philosophy of language.<sup>8</sup> The question why Rorty should push it to the extreme does not therefore evoke any particular answer within his programme of deconstruction.

##### 5. *The sense of Hermeneutics*

I shall combine the sense of 'hermeneutics', which has already been touched with the sense of 'paradigm' as the fourth feature of his programme. An overview of the former gives the impression that Rorty's use in a gloss on the earlier Gadamerian use of it, as the fusion or mediation between past and present. However Rorty prefers to highlight its negative aspect which,



therefore, lends an anti-methodological strain to his approach as seen from the way it is applicable to the paradigms of 'mind' and 'language'. Synchronising this with the anti-methodological attack on 'dogmas', Rorty sees the need to develop this further into a view which could enable us to see how things hang together in the Sellarsian way, as others say about them, even while standing in opposition to the above paradigms. This is the 'hermeneutics of the opposition' as he prefers to term it.<sup>9</sup> Rorty assigns two important functions to it. It should show how things hang together with the rest of what they say; it should also secure an alternative idiom. Rorty's use of 'strong' and 'weak' textualism are identified with the former and the latter respectively.<sup>10</sup>

It appears as though the different senses of textualism Rorty uses could all be arranged on a spectrum as it were; starting from the Heideggerian onslaught on the dialectical growth of western ontology, and Wittgenstein's own polemic which is bordering on a satire, on the one hand, and the Deweyan constructionism to build on the "earth's crust as coalmine, the soil as the source of minerals" on the other. The former leads to the extreme terminus questioning the very possibility of alternative schemes, and the latter to a 'weaker' sense of hermeneutics. Rorty's sense of hermeneutics lies in the middle of the above extremes, so to say. It is neither Heideggerian, nor Wittgensteinian, nor Deweyan, more negating than Gadamerian, and less positive than that of Derrida, so to speak. Looked at from the polemical sense introduced previously, Rorty cannot give a Heideggerian historiography, in which past is analysed in a more systematic fashion than it were possible to carry it to a Wittgensteinian extreme, which rules out the very possibility of alternative frameworks in philosophy. Of course, one can find solace in the contrapositive of the latter, according to which



there would be as many conceptual frameworks as they are permissible; a position which is more coherent than the satirical, and less damaging than the latter's relativism, is of course available in the geneology of Nietzsche, which could, therefore, be admitted on the condition that it should not make philosophers a culturally isolated race.<sup>11</sup> The moral objection against the strong textual sense can thus be sustained on the one hand, at the same time one need not also fully embrace the weak sense. From Rorty's point of view, pragmatism gets sandwiched in between the above because it tries to adjudicate between two rival schemes; and hence it has a 'dangerous' consequence.<sup>12</sup>

For Rorty, both the possibility of constructing a conceptual scheme as well as the very possibility of conceptualising about a rival conceptual scheme, are 'non-starters'. Such a stance on his view could be backed up by a systematic transformation of the so-called 'transcendental argument'.<sup>13</sup> Thus, one can turn the above argument to show that the sceptic cannot have even a starting point. Extending the same in the opposite direction, one may argue that both of the above, that is the one which argues that knowledge rests on foundation, and the counter argument which denies it, cannot have starting points. If scepticism is understood as a species of criticism, one may also cut off the umbilical cord and disallow any form of criticism whatsoever. In fact, Rorty shows signs of strain here as he wants to admit such a premise into his deconstructive scheme. This means that he has to cut off the only connecting link of a conceptual scheme with another; and hence Rorty does not want to go the whole hog with such a Cavellian premise,<sup>14</sup> as he wants to preserve the function of criticism in a weak textualist way. That is to say, he wants to preserve the hermeneutical function of criticism by identifying it with the weak sense, because he wants to see how things hung together in the past in the way he does. How this



particular sense of hermeneutics strengthens a case for deconstruction, does not seem to be a total mystery if taken in the Derridean way; taken in the Rortian way, neither the parleys with criticism, nor the sense of criticism, are of any help.

### 6. Rorty's Idea of Deconstruction

In the light of the above, one can surmise that though Rorty's idea of deconstruction looks like a metaphor at first sight, it shows streaks of originality. To some extent such deconstructive programmes have already engaged the attention of philosophers. Probably it makes its appearance in Richard Bernstein's work too, who shares similar thoughts under Gadamer's influence.<sup>15</sup> However, what brought Rorty close to the brink is the negative stance suggested by him. On the contrary, Bernstein turns it into a positive transcendence, or a Hegelian *aufgehoben*. But in the case of Rorty, the donning of the Derridean mantle, which originally proposed to 'dismantle the greatest totality' has strongly motivated him to bring down the greatest totality of the linguistic paradigm. Rorty's avowed aim is to throw out of gear the idea that language can represent the non-linguistic, by taking the Wittgensteinean, or the Sellarsian dictum which asserts that 'everything is a linguistic affair', into its extreme conclusion; accordingly, the very paradigm of philosophy of language is one grand illusion. Rorty draws the sexiest interpretation, more by Rortianising Derrida, than by anything else.

Within Derrida's scheme, the deconstructive show of the vacuity of first philosophy seems to take 'all philosophy' is language' a step further than this, or more precisely, to a level more foundational than this, as attested to by remarks like 'language is a kind of philosopheme'.<sup>16</sup> While Derrida's programme may be understood to hold that language has a certain linguistic base of philosophy, Rorty airs a thesis according to which philosophy is the literature (or poetry) of language—a



a vast difference! To some extent, the former goes to prove that Derrida is not as much deconstructionist as he is often thought to be, and the latter is of comparable interest to Apel's programme of semiotical transformation of philosophy; likewise, Derrida seems to represent a positive goal of grammatical transformation of philosophy, which is very different from deconstruction. Rorty's textualist ambition thus overlooks the text.

### 7. *Rorty's Sense of Paradigm*

The Rortianisation of Derrida is paradigmatic in that it takes mind as a mirror in much the same way as Derrida takes philosophy is a kind of writing; the wittgensteinean dissolution of mind and language must be replaced by a positive 'edifying' one; the latter cannot be deconstructed, and thus it leads to a paradox. Rorty makes much of Derrida's front against the 'metaphysics of presence'. One may identify the former's enterprise with 'deconstructing' epistemology in exactly the same way Derrida has done for metaphysics. Such *mutatis mutandis* appeal cannot, however, be sustained unless it is shown that epistemology can give rise to a negative paradigm. Nor does it become clear after this, whether one can show how these two can exhaust philosophical texts, systems, or philosophers for that matter.

As Rorty sees it, there is close link between paradigm and deconstruction; thus, if it is paradigmatically true that knowledge has no foundations, then the way is open for deconstruction. Both mind and language belong to this genre, because they issue out either in a theory of knowledge, or in a theory of reference. Rorty's animus is directed more against the source points in both. What about his own edifying paradigm—does it stand for deconstruction? It seems that he confronts a paradox here or he overworks the metaphor of deconstruction, or else he wants his



own paradigm to hang in the air without support. At one point, he is forced to confess that his own paradigm cannot be brought into its proper focus (364).

It appears as though Rorty is caught up in the tangles by his struggle on the one hand and the failure to generate a viable area of metaphilosophical enquiry on the other. Nevertheless, he is clearly operating within a paradigmatic enquiry of commensurating theory of knowledge, or the commensurating hermeneutics, as we can call it, holding at the same time that the opposite poles such as natural and human sciences, fact and value, nature and spirit are 'artificial diremptions.' The attempt to unite them begs the question because it assumes that the talk about any such distinction is at best a confusion. Such pretensions of unity remains midway between the unity of the above poles on the one hand and the lack of unity on the other. An important sidelight of this view is, therefore, that it misrepresents the relation between theory and practice; that is to say, it tries to mediate the relation by 'deconstructing' *theoria* and leaving *praxis* for the purpose of sustaining the conversation, in strange contrast to approaches like Bernstein's, which makes an attempt to elevate the discussion of the dialectics of analytical philosophy to a new height of metaphilosophical discourse by setting aside theoretical speculations (a spectator theory of knowledge) and adopting a *lebenswelt* view or a praxiological theory of knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

### 8. The Deweyan Argument

In my understanding, what blocks Rorty from carrying on the process of deconstructions is the Deweyan *praxis*. More precisely, it is the praxiological strain of his theory of knowledge that acts as an anti-dote. This means that even if one grants the efficacy of both Wittgensteinian and Heideggerian proof of



the falsity of all previous philosophy, this need not be the only way to interpret the dialectics; on the contrary, as Bernstein has pointed out, Deweyan reconstruction has certain positive features to recommend. Accordingly, epistemology could still thrive by spreading its wings so as to include not only the cognitive, but also the noncognitive; it could replace 'interaction' of subject-object paradigm by the 'transaction' of all elements of experience; knowledge that is given may be combined with that which is 'anticipated' on the one hand; that which is lived through may be combined with that which is 'lived forward', and finally, the spectator account of knowledge may give place to an 'agentive' type. Contrary to what Rorty believes, there is no Deweyan argument for deconstruction and consequently, this shows the weakness of the deconstructive programme more than anything else.<sup>18</sup>

Department of Philosophy  
University of Calicut  
CALICUT-673635 (Kerala)

A. KANTHAMANI

#### NOTES

1. The most interesting way of countering Rorty's metaphilosophical argument is by not accepting the 'symbiosis' of the history of philosophy and the history of science on the basis of paradigmatic development of each on a linear scale, while at the same time accepting their confluence as involving a synthesis of their methods. Rorty formulates the maxim: "We should treat history of philosophy as we treat the history of science". See his "The Historiography of Philosophy for Genres" in *Philosophy in History* (Ideas in Context Series) Ed. by R. Rorty, J. B. Schneewind and Quentin Skinner, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984), esp. p. 49; see also pp. 55-6, when Rorty



explains why both of the above 'genre' should not be treated as different and calls the resolution of these debates is a philosophical (metaphilosophical) rather than a historical question.

2. See fn. 1 : It is doubtful whether Kuhn's concept of paradigm is directly applicable to philosophy; even if a symbiosis of the above type is granted, it does not follow that there must be a synthesis. If the above account is correct, then both Apel's thesis about the complementarity and Bernstein's thesis about the 'going beyond' (*aufheben*), are enterprises quite different from that of Rorty's, though all of them lie on the side of hermeneutics. The *locus classicus* is Bernstein's book *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (Oxford; Basil Blackwell, 1983)
3. The two titles are : *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1979) and *Consequences of Pragmatism : Essays 1972-80* (University of Minnesota Press, 1982).
4. Rorty is currently passing through a 'quasi-transcendalist' phase as evidenced by his late "Beyond Realism and Anti-Realism" and to some extent, this shares Bernstein's Hegelian 'agon-dialectic' or *aufheben* view. see also f. n. 2. Consequently, the recent attack on Rorty concentrates more on the 'freedom of spirit' rather than the 'above-battle position'. One may surmise that these are the two distinct phases of Rorty's thought. See Ernst Sosa's article, "Serious Philosophy and Freedom of Spirit" *Journal of Philosophy* (Dec. 1987), pp. 707-726.
5. For Apel's exposition see his *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy* (German in 1973) trans. by Glyn Adey and David Frishy (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).
6. A very similar point is expressed in Rorty's 'philosophy in America Today' (mimeographed).
7. Lately Rorty refers to it again by recruiting Donald Davidson also for the neo-pragmatist cause. See his "Pragmatism, Davidson and Truth" in *Truth and Interpretation : Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson* ed. by E. Le Pore (Oxford : 1986), pp. 333-35 see also f. n. 4 above.
8. For the debate between Derrida and Searle, see Derrida "Signature Event Context" in *Glyph, I*, pp. 192-97 : [and Searle's reply, in "Reiterating the Differences" (*ibid.*,) pp. 198-208 (1977)]; and see also Derrida "Limited Inc abc" in *Glyph, II*, pp. 162-254 (1977).
9. This phrase occurs in his *Philosophy and Mirror of Nature*, p. 365.



*Richard Rorty's Metaphilosophical Argument*

10. For the distinction between the 'weak' and 'strong' sexualism, see COP. see f. n. 3 above.
11. For a positive account of Nietzsche's genealogy, see Michael Foucault's seminal essay on "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History" as discussed in chapter 5 of Michael Foucault *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (106 ff.) ed. by P. Rabinow and H. Dreyfus (Basil Blackwell : Oxford, 1983).
12. For Rorty's comment on pragmatism as 'dangerous', see f. n. on p in COP; see f. n. 3 above.
13. Rorty's development of the argument is found in his "Transcendental Arguments, Self-Reference and Pragmatism" in *Transcendental Arguments and Science*. ed. by P. Bieri and R. P. Horstmann and L. Krug (Dordrecht : Reidel, 1979) pp. 77-103.
14. Rorty's remarks on Cavell appears in Essay 10 in COP; see f. n. 3 above ("Cavell's Skepticism").
15. In this and in what follows. I am very much indebted to R. Bernstein's *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (Basil Blackwell : Oxford 1983).
16. See Rorty's essay on Derrida in COP; see f. n. 3 above.
17. Again, my indebtedness to Bernstein's remarks on Dewey, see f. n. 13.
18. This is an improved version of the paper presented in the Indian Philosophical Congress (1981) titled "Rorty's Paradox of Philosophy".



## THE PHILOSOPHY OF KALIDAS BHATTACHARYYA

Proceedings of a seminar organised by the Department of Philosophy, Rajasthan University, the book contains a critical appraisal of various aspects of the late **Kalidas Bhattacharyya's** philosophical thought, and includes his own final formulation of his philosophical position.

Edited by **Daya Krishna, A. M. Ghose and P. K. Srivastava**

The book includes contributions from **K. L. Sharma** (A Step Beyond K. C. Bhattacharyya), **Daya Krishna** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya and the Logic of Alternation), **S. K. Chattopadhyaya** (Professor Bhattacharyya's "Alternative Standpoints" of Philosophy), **K. Bagchi** (Subjective and Objective Attitudes as Alternatives : A study of Professor Kalidas Bhattacharyya's view of Knowledge-Object Unity), **N. K. Sharma** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya's Philosophy : Alternative Absolutes), **R. S. Bhatnagar** (Philosophy and Meta-Philosophy : Study of a Fundamental Dichotomy in Kalidas Bhattacharyya's Thought), **Mrs. Yogesh Gupta** (Pre-suppositions of Science and Philosophy : A Critical Study), **Mrinal Kanti Bhadra** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya's View of Freedom and Existentialist Thought), **Rajendra Prasad** (Freedom and Existential Thought), **Rajendra Prasad Pandey** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya on the Indian Concept of Man), **K. J. Shah** (Religion—Sophisticated and Unsophisticated), **J. N. Mohanty** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya as a Metaphysician).

1/8 Demy, Pages 239. Price Rs. 60/-

**Contact :** The Editor,

Indian Philosophical Quarterly,

Department of Philosophy,

Poona University, PUNE 411 007.



*Indian Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. XVI, No. 2.

April 1989

## RUSSELL'S NON-PHENOMENALIST REDUCTION OF PHYSICAL OBJECTS

### 1. Introduction

In 1957, in a letter to A. J. Ayer, Russell regretfully stated that his theory of perception "is rejected as a wild paradox by philosophers of all schools." The reason for this rejection was, as Russell himself noticed, that they "unanimously misunderstood" his theory.<sup>1</sup> I am sympathetic to Russell's sentiment. One of the widely misunderstood items of his theory of perception is his constructionist view of physical objects. During the period from 1912 to 1927<sup>2</sup> Russell considered physical objects to be logical constructions out of actual and possible sense-data. Many commentators<sup>3</sup> have suggested that in constructing physical objects Russell abandoned his realist theory of perception for a version of phenomenalism. Their claim is that in his constructionism Russell presents a *phenomenalistic* reduction of physical objects. But Russell explicitly denies that he ever did so.<sup>4</sup> I think that Russell is *right* and the commentators are wrong. He *never* accepted the phenomenalist view of the external world.

In this paper \* I argue that Russell always held a *realist* position despite the fact that he constructs physical objects out of actual and possible sense-data. I defend this view by showing that Russell's constructionism does not involve a phenomenological reduction of physical objects. This approach will have at least two advantages, *viz.* that the same arguments, on the one

Received : 15-9-87



hand, will reject the charge that Russell commits himself to phenomenalism and, on the other hand, will also secure his realism.

## 2. *Relation of Perception to Physical Objects*

In *MPD* (p. 13) Russell states that "in the years from 1910 to 1914, I became interested, not only in what the physical world is, but in how we come to know it. The relation of perception to physics is a problem which has occupied me intermittently ever since that time." During this period (and beyond), Russell attempts a reductionist analysis of empirical knowledge, the foundations of which are objects with which we have direct perception. His first excursion into the problem of perception is found in *PP*, where following Descartes, Russell engages in a programme of systematic doubt, seeking to discover if there is "any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it" (*PP*. 7). Ultimately, he is confident that our knowledge of the external world must be based in those elements of it with which we are immediately acquainted. Russell's quest for certainty and his search for the basic elements of our knowledge is conditioned by his doctrine of acquaintance, that those elements with which we have immediate acquaintance have a privileged status. He concludes that these objects are always sense-data, "the things that are immediately known in sensation" (*PP*. 12). Strictly speaking, we can never perceive physical objects but only sense-data and their properties and relations.

Then how can we answer the question: do physical objects exist? If they do, how do we come to know that they exist? In *PP* Russell suggests that although physical objects are not directly perceptible, they can be known indirectly as the causes of our sense-data. However, before he defends this position Russell tries to rationalize the question: can we find in our given



*Russell's Non-Phenomenalist Reduction*

experience any feature that tends to show that there are physical objects? He find no philosophical proof. He agrees that [i]n one sense it must be admitted that we can never *prove* the existence of things other than ourselves and our experience" (PP. 22). But although Russell admits that scepticism and solipsism are logically possible, he shows how it is *reasonable* to adopt the hypothesis that "there really are objects independent of us, whose action on us causes our sensations" (PP. 23). Again, "it is rational to believe that our sense-data are really signs of the existence of something independent of us and our perceptions" (PP. 27). These passages indicate Russell's explicit commitment to two theses *viz.* the realist one that physical objects exist independently of our perception of them and the representationalist one that physical objects are causes of our sense-data.

Immediately after the publication of *PP* on January 24, 1912 Russell developed a more sceptical doubt about his *PP* position realizing that it suffered from the serious defect of giving physical objects an ever unobservable status. Russell's private correspondence with Lady Ottoline Morrell<sup>5</sup> indicates that it was Wittgenstein who convinced Russell that the way he tries to relate perception to physical objects was doomed to failure to the sceptic's argument.<sup>6</sup> Russell's explicit commitment to a causal theory of perception in *PP* seems to make it impossible that we should ever know anything about the existence of physical objects which are supposed to lie behind our private sense-data. Once we admit that it is only sense-data that are directly perceptible, any attempt to pass beyond sense-data to physical objects becomes vulnerable to sceptical attack. How can sense-experience give us knowledge of what, *ex hypothesi*, is not perceptible?

Russell's sceptical doubt about his *PP* position is evident in "On Matter".<sup>7</sup> Immediately before he started writing this paper



he explained to Ottoline Morrell what he intended to accomplish in it : " I haven't had enough courage hitherto about matter, I haven't been sceptical enough. I want to write a paper which my enemies will call the bankruptcy of realism ".<sup>8</sup> Three days later, while reporting to Ottoline Morrell that he had started writing " On Matter " and had reached page 9, he reiterated his intention : " I will shock people, especially those who would like to agree with me — it [ ' On Matter ' ] is altogether too sceptical ".<sup>9</sup> However, after he had shown the futility of his *PP* defence of physical objects, Russell, instead of joining with the sceptic, went in a new direction to defend physical object from the threat of scepticism. This direction is the emergence of logical construction, the theory that physical objects are constructed, instead of inferred, out of actual and possible sense - data (sensibilia).<sup>10</sup>

Although the constructionist theory emerged in " On Matter " Russell fully developed it in *OKEW*, *RSDP*, and other places. The constructionist view starts from a very simple and obvious fact that what we know about the external world is based upon and verified by what we are acquainted with. Russell expresses this fact in saying : " empirical knowledge is confined in what we actually observe " (*OKEW*. 117). It is interesting to notice that the ultimate constituents out of which physical objects are constructed are also constituents with which we have direct acquaintance. When sense-data were first introduced they were used as the basis for inferences to physical objects. Now the same sense-data, supplemented by sensibilia<sup>11</sup> (" which have the same metaphysical and physical status as sense-data, without necessarily being data to any mind " [ *RSDP*. 142 ] ), are used to construct physical objects. Thus to say that tables, chairs, houses and the rest are logical constructions out of sensibilia is to say



that they can be defined as functions of sensibilia without making any reference to physical objects as inferred entities.

### 3. *What is Phenomenalism?*

Phenomenalism is a philosophical theory of perception according to which, in its strict sense, all our knowledge, beliefs and conjectures about physical objects begin and end with sense-data, and that sense-data are *mental*. The theory *abandons entirely* the notion of external physical objects as entities of a different sort from sense-data. It tries to reduce physical objects solely to a collection of actual sense-data. It holds "that there are only percepts" (*A Matter*, 209). I take phenomenalism to be a form of *anti-realism*. Whereas a realist holds that physical objects are able to exist and retain some, if not all, of the properties which we perceive them as having, even when unperceived, a phenomenalist denies this. He denies the existence of a physical world lying behind the world of experience. There is no reality apart from sense-data; there is nothing left over for us to infer from them. So phenomenalism is not only a form of anti-realism, but also a form of *idealism* for holding the theses that (a) physical objects are *reduced* to nothing more than sense-data, and that (b) sense-data are mental.

There may be several versions of phenomenalism of which I take the following three to be the main ones :

(1) According to the first version, physical objects are defined as "logical constructions out of sense-data".<sup>12</sup> They are nothing over and above sense-data themselves. On this view sense-data are *actual* mental entities. So to approach phenomenalism is to reduce physical objects to actual sense-data.

(2) A second version of phenomenalism holds that physical objects are nothing but a collection of *actual* and *possible* sense-data. Historically, this version of phenomenalism is generally



traced back to J. S. Mill who regarded matter as consisting of "groups of permanent possibilities of sensation"<sup>13</sup> In a similar vein, Armstrong defines it as the theory that "the physical world is nothing more than sense-impressions, actual and possible".<sup>14</sup>

(3) The third version of phenomenalism is the most recent and may be called linguistic phenomenalism. This type of phenomenalism tends to show that what is meant by talk about physical objects can be expressed solely in terms of actual and possible sense-data. On such a view no physical object is different from the class of actual and possible sense-data; therefore, defenders of phenomenalism claim that statements about the former can be translated (without any loss of meaning) into statements about the latter. As Ayer states, "every empirical statement about a physical object, whether it seems to refer to a scientific entity or to an object of the more familiar kind that we normally claim to perceive, is reducible to a statement, or set of statements, which refer exclusively to sense-data".<sup>15</sup>

These versions are not quite identical, but they all have something in common. They all try to *reduce* physical objects to sense-data, sense-impressions, sensations, etc. That is to say, they define physical objects in terms of a class of actual or possible sense-data.

During his constructionist period Russell, in various places, talks as if he were maintaining a phenomenalist position. Here are some of the passages :

The "matter" of the physicist and the "thing" of common sense will ... be collections of constituents of the nature of sense-data, some actually perceived some not.<sup>16</sup>  
... *in so far* as physics and common sense is verifiable, it must be capable of interpretation in terms of actual sense-data alone (OKEW. 88-9).



*Russell's Non-Phenomenalist Reduction*

...the one thing seen at different times by the same or different people must be a construction, being in fact nothing but a certain grouping of certain 'sensibilia' (RSDP. 161).

...the table which is neutral as between different observers (actual and possible) is the set of all those particulars which would naturally be called 'aspects' of the table from different points of view. ...[T]hese particulars together with...others as are unperceived, jointly are the table; and...a similar definition applies to all physical objects (AM. 98-9).

*Prima facie* these passages have obvious phenomenalist overtones. But I believe that in these passages Russell is not advocating phenomenism because to accept phenomenism is to accept, to some extent, idealism. Since in phenomenism physical objects are reduced to sense-data (actual and possible) and since sense-data are *mental*, it cannot escape the metaphysical world view that a Berkelian type of idealism (and a certain version of solipsism) entails. So Russell cannot have any truck with phenomenism, and he justifiably denies that he ever really accepted phenomenism.

4. *Russell's Denial of Phenomenalism*

Russell's first explicit denial of phenomenism (which I believe goes mostly *unnoticed*) occurred on April 12, 1915, in a meeting of the Aristotelian Society in which C. D. Broad presented a paper entitled "Phenomenism".<sup>17</sup> Broad characterizes Russell's constructionism as phenomenism and criticizes the theory. By "phenomenism" Broad means "a philosophical theory which claims to be able in some sense to dispense with at least one of the three [i.e., sensations, sense-data, and physical objects], viz. physical objects".<sup>18</sup> A phenomenist, accord-



ing to Broad, "proposes to substitute for physical objects classes of which sense-data are particular individuals".<sup>19</sup> Broad then applies this theory to Russell: "[t]his is as far as some phenomenologists, e.g., Mr. Russell, are at present prepared to go".<sup>20</sup> However, at the end of Broad's paper, Russell publicly declared that his theory of constructionism did not commit him to phenomenalism. As reported in *The Athenaeum*, "Mr. Bertrand Russell, replying in the discussion, said that 'phenomenalism' was not the term he himself used to denote his theory".<sup>21</sup> So it seems quite obvious that during the very period in which he propounded constructionism, Russell had in mind that his theory was different from phenomenalism.

The reason why Russell's theory is quite different from phenomenalism is that the constructionist policy does not commit him to denying the realist view that there are physical objects existing unperceived. When he maintains that an object, say  $Q$ , is a logical construction out of  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$  (sensibilia) he is not necessarily committed to denying the existence of  $Q$  as a non-empirical entity distinct from  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$ . All he is doing is *avoiding* having to postulate the existence of such an entity for which we do not have any empirical evidence. Russell frequently insists that he is not denying that there is something over and above the constructed physical object: "I want to make it clear that I am not *denying* the existence of anything; I am only refusing to affirm it. I refuse to affirm the existence of anything for which there is no evidence, but I equally refuse to deny the existence of anything against which there is no evidence." (PLA. 273-4). The fact that Russell does not deny the existence of physical objects should be sufficient to justify the claim both that he is not a phenomenalist (à la Broad's definition, for example) and that he is a realist. This is why, I think Russell's response to Broad's charge that Russell is a phenomenalist is quite justified.



Seven years later Russell reiterated his denial that he never really accepted phenomenism.

I have never called myself a phenomenist, but I have no doubt sometimes expressed myself as though this were my view. In fact, however, I am not a phenomenist. For practical purposes, I accept the truth of physics, and depart from phenomenism so far as may be necessary for upholding the truth of physics. I do not, of course, hold that physics is certainly true, but only that it has a better chance of being true than philosophy has. Having accepted the truth of physics, I try to discover the minimum of assumptions required for its truth, and to come as near to phenomenism as I can. But I do not in the least accept the phenomenist philosophy as necessarily right, nor do I think that its supporters always realize what a radical destruction of ordinary beliefs it involves.<sup>22</sup>

Accepting the "truth of physics" means, for Russell, accepting physical theory interpreted in a realist manner, which, in turn, means interpreting physical theory as referring to *unobservable* things and events.<sup>23</sup> Russell accepts the truth of physics without any question. He holds that common sense accepts the truth of physics over the speculations of philosophy. As to the relative truth value of physics and philosophical systems he says:

Philosophers may say: What justification have you for accepting the truth of physics. I reply: Merely a common-sense basis. If you ask anyone who is neither a philosopher nor a physicist, he will say that physics has a much better chance of being true than has the system of this or that philosopher. To set up a philosophy against physics is rash: philosophers who have done so have always ended in disaster (Reply 700).



Russell takes common sense beliefs as a necessary foundation on which the structure of science is built. The views which are advanced by physics are to be accepted as true and these views provide part of the data on which philosophical speculation is based. I think that Russell's rejection of phenomenalism is rooted in his strong adherence to a *realist* interpretation of physics.<sup>24</sup> As he says, "an honest acceptance of physics demands recognition of unobserved occurrences" (Reply, 701).

The general acceptability of science implies that there are unperceived events. Although there is evidence that Russell wished to construct physical objects with only observed sense-data (see RSDP, 150), on his later admission, he considered this as an "intellectual game" (Reply, 701, cf. also MPD 105). However, this "intellectual game" led Stace to comment :

Always his [ Russell's ] philosophy wavers unhappily between phenomenalism and scientific realism. In the end the scientific realism always wins... From the position of scientific realism Russell has from time to time held out fluttering and ineffectual hands towards phenomenalism. But he has never embraced it. His traffic with phenomenalism has been no more than a mild and insincere flirtation.<sup>25</sup>

Since Russell had a prejudice in favour of physics during his constructionist period (cf. MPD 130) and since physics requires unobservable physical objects and events, Russell introduced the theory of sensibilia. The theory of sensibilia suggests that sensibilia continue to exist when they are not in the relation of acquaintance. Russell uses these unsensed sensibilia to justify the reality of unperceived objects and events. The introduction of the unsensed sensibilia helps him escape the charges of both solipsism and phenomenalism, since unsensed sensibilia (of Russellian variety) have no place in a consistent phenomenalism. Admitting that



*Russell's Non-Phenomenalist Reduction*

sensibilia can exist unperceived, Russell reinforces his belief that objects of physics and common sense exist as constructions of unsensed sensibilia. This goes against phenomenalism in a straightforward sense. Thus Anthony Quinton has remarked: "in the theory of knowledge he [Russell] has really been much more concerned to save the reality, the independence from mind, of perceived fact than to establish the rigorously empirical credentials of his conception of the external world".<sup>26</sup>

Now one might claim that Russell's construction of physical objects commits him to phenomenalism, at least, in the sense expressed in the second version of phenomenalism. When a phenomenalist says that physical objects are permanent possibilities of sensation, it sounds close to Russell's construction of physical objects out of sensed and unsensed sensibilia. Permanent possibilities of sensation seem to imply that if we were to be at the right place at the right time we would have an experience of such and such sort or, in other words, the physical objects would seem to us to be in such and such a way. But I think that this claim is suspect on a very important ground. Whereas for a phenomenalist, the permanent possibilities of sensation have only a possible existence (since there is no extra-mental support for them), for Russell unsensed sensibilia are *actual* (real). Since Russell accepts the truths of physics, his position is distinguished from the phenomenalist's by the fact that unsensed sensibilia are *actual* constituents of physical objects.

As soon as Russell admits the *reality* of unsensed sensibilia and includes them in construction his realism is completely *secured*. I think that even the *spirit* of Russell's pre-constructionist realism is found in his introduction of the theory of sensibilia. This conclusion is fully borne out by the textual evidence. Thus any claim that Russell is not a realist but a phenomenalist would break down; I believe, against such asser-



tions as that if a man comes newly to occupy a position in a room "we can reasonably suppose that *some* aspect [unsensed sensible] of the universe existed from that point of view, though no one was perceiving it" (*OKEW* 95). And again, Russell asserts, "[i]t is open to us to believe that the ideal elements [unsensed sensibilia] exist, and there can be no reason for disbelieving this", although "we cannot *know* it" (*OKEW*, 117). These passages match Russell's undisputed realism in *PP* where he says that "every principle of simplicity urges us to adopt the natural view, that there really are objects other than ourselves and our sense-data which have an existence not dependent upon our perceiving them" (*PP*, 24). It is not surprising, then, that in *UCM* Russell explicitly identifies his position as "realistic" (*UCM*, 120). This view also agrees with Russell's reply to Professor E. R. Eames' question as to whether she was "correct in ascribing to him epistemological realism, in the sense that the world is there, and real, and acts upon us in perception". To this question "Russell replied emphatically that he had always been a realist".<sup>27</sup>

We have yet to show that Russell's constructionism does not involve an acceptance of phenomenalism in the third sense. We have seen that Russell does not deny that there are external physical objects over and above sense-data. But sometimes he confines himself to a linguistic level which holds that to say that physical objects are logical constructions out of sense-data is to say that statements about them can be translated into statements about sense-data. And if we can do this we will have at least "extruded" the inferred physical objects "from the world of what there is" (*PLA*, 273). Here one might claim that Russell is doing exactly what a (linguistic) phenomenalist would do *viz.* translating statements about physical objects into statements about sense-data. Thus Sainsbury claims, "[i]n Russell's pheno-



menalistic phase, from 1914 to the middle 1920s, he can easily be read as claiming that physical objects are pure translational constructions out of sense-data".<sup>28</sup> There is no denying the fact that Russell sometimes takes construction on a linguistic level (see RSDP. 149; *IMP.* 73). However, even if we take Russell's linguistic version as his final position about construction, still, I suggest, he can easily escape phenomenalism. For a strict phenomenalist, say Berkeley, sense-data are *mental*, but for Russell they are *physical* (see *OKEW.* 71; RSDP. 141-5; UCM. 123).<sup>29</sup> When the phenomenologists say that physical object statements are to be translated into statements about sense-data, they must mean that physical object statements are to be translated into statements about mental sense-data. But in Russell's case they must be translated into statements about physical sensibilia.

Ayer has suggested that during his constructionist period Russell abandoned his causal theory of perception (which he reverted to after 1927) for a version of phenomenalism.<sup>30</sup> Our previous discussion shows that Russell explicitly denied phenomenalism. I suggest that Russell need not even abandon the causal theory of perception. By a "causal theory of perception" we usually mean a scientific theory of perception of the external world. On this view perception is a *causal* network in which physical objects are causal stimuli, emitting light waves etc. which travel through space and strike the retina etc. and become a sense-datum in the brain. Each of these steps is causally connected to the previous step. In his pre-constructionist period, Russell accepted a version of this causal theory (i.e., a Lockean variety) to justify the existence of the ever unknown physical objects (things in-themselves). But later, due to Wittgenstein's criticisms,<sup>31</sup> he

...5



realized that such an account of physical objects is open to grave doubt and ultimately rests upon a principle for which no empirical justification could be given. So he prefers to construct (rather than to infer) physical objects out of sense-data. In doing so Russell puts the burden of justification on construction rather than on the causal theory of perception. The constructed "thing" takes the place of the inferred "thing-in-itself", which was regarded, in pre-constructionist work, as the *cause* of sense-data. Now after the construction is completed, there is no *need* to posit such a cause in order to give an account of the reality we talk about. But, from the fact that such a cause is not posited, it does not follow that it is denied. Russell must not be interpreted as denying that our sense-data have external causes. That is to say, he should not be interpreted as denying the scientific account of perception.

I think that Russell's view that physical objects are logical constructions is not incompatible with his *realist* view even holding a causal theory of perception. Nothing in Russell's construction of physical objects indicates a rejection of the causal theory of perception.<sup>32</sup> But what Russell is mainly concerned with is an interpretation and verification of the objects of common sense and physics on the basis of sense-data, and not on the basis of the causal *origin* of the sense-data. The origin is there whether it is inferred or not which, from an ontological point of view, is the end of the causal chain. "This explains why", as Eames rightly suggested, "in spite of what appears to be a phenomenalist method of constructing the objects of science and of common sense from sensed particulars, the causal theory of perception is brought in as a required assumption."<sup>33</sup>

It might also be argued that a version of causal theory is evident when he insists that the "inferences from perceptions to



*Russell's Non-Phenomenalist Reduction*

physical facts depend always upon causal laws" (*OKEW.* 129). Russell explicitly holds that the construction of things consists of "those series of aspects which obey the laws of physics" (*OKEW.* 115-6; see also *RSDP.* 164). Physics has been built upon the assumption that there are unobserved objects or events the effects of whose behavior has been found to be consistent in such and such circumstances. Thus there is something *objective* which is a prerequisite assumption for the establishment of laws of physics. Now what could these laws of physics be other than causal laws which allow "us to infer the existence of one *thing* (or *event*) from the existence of one or more others" (*OKEW.* 216; cf. *Reply.* 701-2). Russell's notion of matter also clearly reveals his assumption about a causal connection between things and their appearances. "The whole causal efficacy of a thing resides in its matter" (*RSDP.* 158; see also 170), so appearances are causally affected by matter.

5. *Conclusion*

In light of the above discussion it becomes clear that (a) Russell's constructionist programme does not commit him to phenomenalism and (b) it is quite compatible with his realism holding a causal theory of perception. But one might wonder, if Russell should hold a realist theory of perception by not denying the independently existing physical objects (which in fact he does not deny), then why should he *avoid* affirming their existence? The answer would be, that he is playing an intelligent *epistemo-logical* game. Since he is mainly concerned to show the general *grounds* for what we claim to know, with the constructionist technique he can talk about physical objects without having to *assert* that such objects exist as the *causes* of our sensibilia. The whole constructionist programme is designed not to deny the inferred entities, but to avoid any risk of error in our pursuit of



empirical knowledge: "you have anyhow the successive appearances, and if you can get on without assuming the metaphysical and constant desk, you have a smaller risk of error than you had before" (PLA. 280). But unlike a phenomenalist Russell is not denying the substantial desk. There *may be* a metaphysical substance behind the desk's empirical manifestations (PLA. 272). It is only practical to treat the desk as if it is nothing but a collection of sensibilia.<sup>34</sup> Such a consideration "fits the facts, and there is no empirical evidence against it; it is also free from logical impossibilities" (OKEW. 101).

In rejecting phenomenalism, Russell more often stresses that there may be something more than sense-data. But he is inclined to remain non-committal. The reason is epistemological, that the assertion of physical objects more than a class of sense-data "introduces an element of unverifiable dogma" (OKEW. 153). But it is interesting to notice that in Russell's philosophy the epistemological and ontological aspects are not unrelated. He seems to accept the truth of physics without any question, but the matter becomes epistemologically interesting later on. As Russell says, "[i]n ontology I start by accepting the truth of physics; in epistemology I ask myself: Given the truth of physics, what can be meant by an organism having 'knowledge', and what knowledge can it have" (Reply. 700)? Logical construction of physical objects has been designed to answer the problem of our knowledge of the external world. The project is mainly epistemological in the sense that it has been used in determining the *basis* for belief in physical objects. But Russell very often adds various ontological issues (like the truth of physics), to make it both epistemological and ontological. The whole plan of constructing physical objects depends for its use upon the body of some scientific propositions whose truth value



*Russell's Non-Phenomenalist Reduction*

193

is not challenged. The policy is to make physics possible upon empirical grounds while minimizing the amount of inference to non-empirical entities.<sup>35</sup>

Department of Philosophy  
McMaster University, Canada  
and Chittagong University, Bangladesh.

SAJAHAN MIAH

## NOTES

- \* In this paper reference to most of Russell's published works are given in brackets immediately after passages cited. These references are abbreviated as follows: *A. Matter* = *The Analysis of Matter* (1927); *AM* = *The Analysis of Mind* (1921); *IMP* = *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1919); *MPD* = *My Philosophical Development* (1959); *OKEW* = *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914); *PLA* = "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" (1918-19), quotations are from the reprint in *Logic and Knowledge*; *PP* = *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912), references are made to the 1959 edition by the Oxford University Press; *RSDP* = "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics" (1914), references are given to the reprint in *Mysticism and Logic* (Penguin edition, 1953); *Reply* = "Reply to Criticisms" (1944), in *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, edited by P. A. Schilpp; *UCM* = "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter" (1915), references are to *Mysticism and Logic*.
1. Bertrand Russell to A. J. Ayer, Bertrand Russell Archives (hereafter cited as R. A.) at McMaster University, letter 710. 047060, 19 Jan. 1957
  2. The received view about Russell's logical construction is that it emerged in 1914, in *OKEW*, for the first time. But a close study of Russell's unpublished works, supplemented by his correspondence, show that this is mistaken. We have now conclusive evidence that Russell was a constructionist in 1912. For details see Sajahan Miah, "The Emergence of Russell's Logical Construction of Physical Objects", *Russell: The Journal of the Bertrand Russell Archives*, Vol. 7 (1987), pp. 11-24.
  3. Ayer, *Bertrand Russell* (New York, 1972), ch. III, esp. pp. 72-82; "An Appraisal of Bertrand Russell's Philosophy", Ralph Schoenman (ed.), *Bertrand Russell: The Philosopher of the Century* (London, 1967).



- p. 173; Sainsbury *Russell* (London, 1979), p. 241; R. E. Nusenoff, "Russell's External World : 1912-1921" *Russell*, no. 29-32 (1978), pp. 62-82; Broad, "Phenomenalism", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Vol. 15 (1914-15), p. 191.
4. Cf. Russell, "Physics and Perception", *Mind*, Vol. 31 (1922), p. 480; Reply, 701, 718; *The Athenaeum*, 4565, April 24, (1915), p. 385.
  5. References to Russell's letters to Ottoline Morrell (hereafter cited as B. R. to O. M.) are to microfilms in the R. A. at McMaster University. The original letters are at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin. When a letter is dated by Russell himself the date is simply given, but when the date is taken from a postmark the fact is signified by "pmkd", while a date when inferred from other sources is given in square brackets. The numbers of these letters are those supplied by Lady Ottoline and her secretary.
  6. See R. B. to O. M. 241 [2 Nov. 1911]; 373, pmkd. 8 March 1912; [427] enclosed with 426, pmkd. 28 April, 1912; 435, pmkd. 2 May, 1912; 459, pmkd. 21 May, 1912. See also B. R. to Lucy M. Donnelly, 26 March, 1912.
  7. Unpublished manuscript, 1912, R. A. File 220.011360, fols. 1-35. Russell started writing "On Matter" on April 27, 1912 and finished on May 13, 1912, cf. B. R. to O. M. [427] attached with 426, pmkd. April 28, 1912; 449, pmkd. May 13, 1912, Russell read this paper to the Department of Philosophy, University of Wales on May 17, 1912, cf. B. R. to O. M. 457, pmkd. 19 May, 1912. He changed and rewrote the paper on 16 October, 1912, cf. B. R. to O. M., 606, pmkd. 16 Oct. 1912.
  8. B. R. to O. M. 427, pmkd. 24 April, 1912.
  9. B. R. to O. M. [427] enclosed with 426, pmkd. 28 April, 1912.
  10. "On Matter", fol. 35.
  11. Although Russell introduces the term "sensibilia" in RSDP, in 1914, the doctrine is found in his philosophy from 1912. Thus in "On Matter" he states that "matter will be composed entirely of qualities of the nature of sense-data, but not only of those which one observer perceives; it will consist of all the sense-data which all possible observers would perceive in perceiving the same thing", fols. 31-2; see also 14, 35. The same view is also found in another unpublished manuscript entitled "Here and There in Sensation", R. A. file 220.011420, fol. 4. Elsewhere Russell identifies "sensibilia" with "ideal" qualities of appearances, see *OKEW*. 116; "Matter, 2 Problems (1) Space (2) Things", unpublished manuscript in the R. A. file 220.022370, fol. 1.
  12. Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge* (Middlesex, 1969, Penguin edn.), p. 100. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar



*Russell's Non-Phenomenalist Reduction*

13. Mill, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (London, 1865), chapter II.
14. A. D. Armstrong, *Perception and the Physical World* (London, 1970), p. 48.
15. Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge*, p. 118.
16. Russell, "On Matter", fol. 35.
17. This paper is published in *PAS*, Vol. 15 (1914-15), 227-51.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
19. *The Athenaeum*, 4565, April 24, 1915, p. 385.
20. Broad, "Phenomenalism", pp. 227-8.
21. *The Athenaeum*, 4565, p. 385.
22. Russell, "Physics and Perception", p. 480.
23. Grover Maxwell, "Russell on Perception: A Study in Philosophical Method" in David Pears (ed.), *Bertrand Russell: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York, 1972), p. 114.
24. E. R. Eames has developed a similar view in her *Bertrand Russell's Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1969), see chapters V & VI.
25. Stace, "Russell's Neutral Monism", in P. A. Schilpp (ed.) *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell* (La Salle, Illinois, 1971, 4th edn.), p. 371.
26. "Russell's Philosophical Development", in his *Thoughts and Thinkers* (London, 1982), p. 283.
27. E. R. Eames, "The Consistency of Russell's Realism", *The Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 27 (1967), p. 510.
28. Sainsbury, *op. cit.*, p. 241.
29. See also "The Nature of Sense-data — A Reply to Dr. Dawes Hicks", *Mind*, Vol. 22 (1913), p. 78; "Letter from Bertrand Russell to the Editor of the *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 12 (1915), p. 392; *Theory of Knowledge: The 1913 Manuscript, The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, Vol. 7, edited by E. R. Eames in collaboration with K. Blackwell (London, 1984), pp. 22, 31.
30. Ayer, *Bertrand Russell*, pp. 72-82.
31. For Wittgenstein's earliest criticism of Russell's epistemological position see S. Miah, "The Emergence of Russell's Logical Construction of Physical Objects", esp. sec III.



32. For such a view see M. H. Salmon, "On Russell's brief but notorious flirtation with phenomenalism" *Russell*, 16 (1974-75), p. 18; Bradie, "Russell's Scientific Realism" typescript (this paper was presented at the Russell Conference '84 in Toronto, Canada) p. 12.
33. Eames, *Bertrand Russell's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 192.
34. For a similar view see J. A. Shaffer, *A Study of Philosophical Analysis With Special Reference to Bertrand Russell's Analysis of the External World* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1970). pp. 143-7. See also Sajahan Miah "Russell on Logical Construction", *Students' Supplement of the Indian Philosophical Quarterley*, Vol XIV-2, pp. 1-25.
35. Thanks are due to Professor Nicholas Griffin for detailed criticisms of an earlier draft of this paper and to Bertrand Russell Archives (McMaster University) and Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center (University of Texas at Austin) for permission to quote from Russell's unpublished manuscript and correspondence.



*Indian Philosophical Quarterly Vol. XVI, No. 2.*  
*April 1989*

## **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND REVERSE DISCRIMINATION**

### *1 Affirmative Actions as Compensatory Justice*

In the past various kinds of atrocities were perpetrated on certain sections of the society, namely the blacks in the United States of America and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Communities in India. "Whites were thought to be defiled by social or residential proximity to blacks, intermarriage was taboo, blacks were denied the same level of public goods—education and legal protection—as whites, were restricted to the most menial occupations, and were barred from any positions of authority over whites. The visceral feelings of black inferiority and untouchability that this system expressed were deeply ingrained in the members of both races, and they continue, not surprisingly, to have their effect. Blacks still form, to a considerable extent, a hereditary social and economic community characterized by widespread poverty, unemployment, and social alienation".<sup>1</sup> Therefore there is need to repair the injury caused to them by preferring them none to those who are not victims of past injustice for placement in jobs and academic and professional programmes. Such an Affirmative Action Programme is primarily justice that is compensatory in character. This is brought out clearly by President Lyndon B. Johnson by the image of a shackled runner:

"Imagine a hundred yard dash in which one of the two runners has his legs shackled. He has progressed 10 yards, while the unshackled runner has gone 50 yards. At that point the judges decide that the race is unfair. How do they rectify the situation?"

**Received : 17-3-87**



Do they merely remove the shackles and allow the race to proceed ? Then they could say that " equal opportunity " now prevailed. But one of the runners would still be 40 yards ahead of the other. Would it not be the better part of justice to allow the previously shackled runner to make up the forty yard gap; or to start the race all over again ? That would be affirmative action towards equality " . ' 2

Affirmative Action prefers those victimised groups to others for placement in jobs and academic programmes corresponding to their percentage in the population.

## II. *Objections Against Affirmative Action*

It is urged that the blacks and the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes must submit themselves to open competition with others on the basis of equality. This argument is unfair. For, it is the same society which, by its past victimisation, has incapacitated these sections of the society to further their own welfare and has made them incapable of competing with others on equal terms.

Secondly, the advocacy of Affirmative Action is said to be blatantly inconsistent. When discrimination is practised against the blacks, it is urged that race is irrelevant. Such practices are arbitrary, capricious and injure them without even a semblance of justification. But when the blacks are preferred to other groups for the placement in jobs and academic programmes, it is claimed that race is relevant.

To this an advocate of Affirmative Action may say that race was used to illtreat the blacks in the past whereas at present, race is not really the basis for preferential treatment of the blacks. Still race is considered to be irrelevant. If so, then, what is the basis of these programmes ? The injuries caused to the



*Affirmative Action and Reverse Discrimination*

199

blacks, and the consequent disadvantageous position they were driven to, necessitate Affirmative Action as a form of compensatory justice—this, and not race which is relevant. However, the determination of those who are to be compensated is relative to the determination of the victims of past injustice. As race becomes a mark or indicator of the injured only because of its consistent use against the blacks in the past, it becomes inevitable to take race into account for distributing the social goods to the past victims of injustice.

Thirdly, it is pointed out that only the non-victims of past injustice are benefitted by Affirmative Action. The critics argue that, as the inability of the blacks to compete with others on equal terms is attributed to their past ill-treatment, we can conclude that the relatively better qualified individuals among the blacks should have altogether escaped from past injustice. Is this sound? It seems that one can draw the loss of potentialities and the consequent inability to compete with others, from past ill-treatment, whereas it is not valid to infer that the beneficiaries of Affirmative Action are those who have altogether escaped from past injury. For, a few injured people are still able to develop their capacities because of their robust and extraordinary personality traits, either inherited or acquired; this becomes truer because of the possibility of the injuries being not grievous enough to crush them. Perhaps Affirmative Action has not benefitted the most injured; yet it is not valid to draw the conclusion from the said premise that compensatory justice is not awarded to the victims of past injustice. This envisages the need to device programmes to compensate the most injured and supplement them to Affirmative Action and not the giving up of preferential treatment.

Obviously the present day situation for blacks is far better than what it was fifty years ago. Therefore, the young blacks



who now apply for placement in educational institutions or jobs are not those who were wronged. Hence, there is no need to compensate them. But, are there changes to such an extent as to set aside compensation? It is a moot point. In addition, even those who were not ill-treated in the past have felt the impact of the victimisation of other blacks. As their negative traits such as the lack of self-confidence, self-respect, etc., are the indirect consequences of the victimisation of the other members of their group, it behoves on the whites to compensate them.

Fourthly, Affirmative Action damages the self-esteem of the blacks. The whites think that the blacks constitute an inferior race and they never give credence to their merit. Even when a black secures a job or a seat in a college entirely by his merit others aver that preferential treatment, and not merit, has played a part in his selection.

### III. *The Group Approach to the Problem.*

Various arguments are urged against the group approach to the problem.

1. The realization of the truth that the individual and not the race is an ethical unit is a great achievement. The moral default committed by a member of a race is one for which he and not the entire race is responsible. That "collective guilt" and "collective responsibility" are unjustifiable on moral grounds. Prof. James Seth rightly asserts that moral progress consists in the gradual discovery of the individual. "The fundamental law of moral progress, whether in the race or in the individual may be stated in essentially the same form. The progress is, in sum and substance, the gradual discovery of the individual. It is difficult for us to realise that the idea of individual moral independence and responsibility is the product of long centuries of moral



development. The ethical unit of earlier times is the tribe or the family; later it becomes the state; later still, perhaps the caste or class; and last of all, the individual."<sup>3</sup>

The truth that the individual is the ethical unit is not lost sight of even in the race-based Affirmative Action. As ill-treatment of the blacks in the past was based on race, it becomes necessary to take note of it in order to identify easily the persons whom compensation is owed. That the individuals alone count is paramount and race is only an inevitable means used to trace the injured. But care should be taken to find out whether there is a high degree of correlation between past injustice and the groups selected for Affirmative Actions. Otherwise it cannot be fair.

The problem of identifying the victims of discrimination can never be exaggerated. Suppose it is held that the employment of the members of a group, say 'A', in the medical field, is less than their ratio in the population. This is not a sufficient ground to show that they are discriminated against. Perhaps they are disinclined to take up jobs in this field. Therefore, the discriminatory practices against the members of group 'A' can be cited as a cause for their inadequate representation in employment but not *vice versa*. In addition, some of the backward groups are not those who were subjected to ill-treatment in the past. Therefore, the determination of the facts regarding past victimisation *vis-a-vis* groups is difficult, but indispensable.

2. What is the meaning of group compensation? What is of importance in any collective compensation is the criterion in the light of which the compensation paid to the group is distributed to the members of the group. Compensating arbitrarily only a few members does not mean that the group is compensated. The most injured among the discriminated who, now, are incapable



of applying for jobs or seats in colleges are not benefitted by Affirmative Action. In the absence of a fair distribution of compensatory justice to all the injured, the so-called compensation is, in truth, empty and misleading.

In considering this view, it is necessary to reiterate that Affirmative Action aims at compensating only the individuals and that the groups constitute only marks for identifying the injured. Hence, "group compensation" is logically inexact. Affirmative Action certainly serves the purpose aimed at, though some may fail to come up to a level in order to derive the benefits under this scheme of dispensation. This fact brings to the fore that Affirmative Action must be supplemented by other programmes for rendering justice to all deserving of compensation.

#### IV. *Reverse Discrimination*

Attempts are made to justify the laying of the burden of rectification on the shoulders of the whites. The whites who neither participated nor, in any way, abetted others in the commission of injustice against the blacks in the past, lose the opportunities for study and employment as a consequence of the introduction of Affirmative Action. These whites owe no debts to them. Therefore, why should it be incumbent on them to bear the burden of Affirmative Action? It is better for the entire society to share the burden; it is more so primarily because of the inability to place the burden on the shoulders of those who perpetrated injustice against the blacks in the past.

It is said that the world is of such a nature that actions, intended to promote the welfare of the greatest number, at times bring a little suffering for a few. For instance, the execution of large scale projects like dams or industrial houses, though improves the economic conditions of the many, does injure some, especially because of the acquisition of their immovable proper-



*Affirmative Action and Reverse Discrimination*

ties situated in the areas in which the projects are to be executed. But the suffering of the few as a consequence of the measures taken in the larger interests of the people is a lesser evil and therefore justified. Affirmative Action is one of such measures.

This is unsatisfactory. What is surprising is that those who urge this argument are oblivious of the right on the part of the victims of these welfare schemes for compensation and if their rights are not to be given just consideration, then, by applying the same logic, one may legitimately argue that there need be no compensatory justice for blacks as well.

Many whites, in truth, are the beneficiaries of the discriminatory practices of the past against the blacks, though, they are not at all responsible for such practices. Had the Blacks been given equal educational opportunities in the past, the corresponding number of whites would have been excluded from educational institutions. Thus, the education of many whites is owing to the denial of opportunities for the Blacks. Therefore, it is not unfair that these Whites should pay the price of rectification.

This is also untenable. It is obvious that no one, after all these years, can link the loss of a particular Black with the gain of a specific White. In other words, the view is too hypothetical and too general to carry conviction for stipulating debts from any individual White, though, at least, a more benevolent and sympathetic attitude can be expected of the enlightened Whites as a result of this argument.

The original objection in the form of 'Reverse Discrimination' carries much weight. While considering it, however, one should take into account the following.

The best method of compensating past injury and thereby alleviating the lot of the Blacks is to provide them with educational



and employment opportunities. That means the denial of these opportunities to some Whites. Therefore, the burden is such that it can be laid only on the shoulders of these Whites and not on the entire society.

The past discrimination of the Blacks is not on the same footing with the alleged Reverse Discrimination of the Whites. In fact, the Blacks were ill-treated in the past merely because of their race and that they were thus deprived of their right to treatment as an equal. In other words, the fact that the Blacks were not treated with the same respect or concern shown to the Whites is rightly viewed to be paramount; but in Affirmative Action the Whites are unfavoured not because of any prejudice or bias, but because of a rational calculation of the best and just distribution of the limited resources of the society. The Whites enjoy the right to treatment as an equal, though they do not share equally the common good. What each individual has a right to is not an equal share of the common good but a consideration equal to the consideration given to others. <sup>4</sup>

### V. *Utilitarian Arguments*

The advocates of Affirmative Action claim that it produces the best consequences for society and that this is an overriding factor than the objections urged against it.

It is asserted that "strong affirmative action involving significant preference should be undertaken only if it will substantially further a social goal of the first importance. While this condition is not met by all programmes of Affirmative Action now in effect, it is met by those which address the most deep-seated, stubborn, and radically unhealthy divisions in the society, divisions whose removal is a condition of basic justice and social cohesion."



Is this claim justifiable? Does Affirmative Action promise the eradication of "the stubborn residues of racial caste" and usher in a more integral society in the future? It seems that it may not promote such a highly desirable form of social change. Affirmative Action is looked upon by the critics as nothing short of Reverse Discrimination in which there is only a rearrangement of the groups for discriminatory purposes. The Whites who now fall outside the Affirmative Action category can and will claim compensatory justice for themselves at a later date. Thus discrimination will be a vicious circle. Moreover, even now, the selection of groups for Affirmative Action is considerably vitiated by the claims and counter claims by various groups for preference instead of justice. The goal of social harmony as a utilitarian value of highest importance can never be realised by means of the race-based Affirmative Action. The indispensable prerequisite for realizing the goal of social harmony is the giving up of the habit of thinking and acting in terms of race.

Again, suppose injustice is caused to one without a reference to the group to which he belongs; can it, therefore, cease to be an evil? Therefore, what is of paramount importance is the realisation that injustice, in any form, irrespective of its race or caste basis, is an evil which must be rooted out at any cost. In addition, this is reinforced by the consideration that mere utility, not ennobled by justice, is not acceptable. If preferential hiring of Blacks is justified on mere utilitarian grounds, then, by applying the same logic, one may claim that discriminatory practices against Blacks, if and when they increase utility for society, is right and reasonable. Therefore, what is basic is justice, not mere utility, from which no one can swerve without committing immorality.



The critics bring to the fore that Affirmative Action shuts out enormous talent from education and employment and thereby leads to a lowering of standards. People have to be contended with the poor performance of doctors, engineers, administrators, lawyers, judges etc., who sadly lack excellence. Worst of it all is the preferential hiring of teachers; this hinders the growth of not only the Whites, but also the very persons for whose development Affirmative Action is designed. Therefore Affirmative Action either keeps the society at a dead level or, perhaps, lowers it. In short, there can be highest utilitarian value for society if and only if the most qualified candidates are selected on the basis of fair and open competition.

To this, one may counter: Was 'merit' an impartial and real criterion of selection in the past? The fact remains that donations, corruption, and influence played a vital role in any admission procedure. What is surprising is that those who were not concerned with the selection of less qualified Whites in preference to better qualified Whites till date raise a hue and cry over preferential treatment of blacks on the basis of the alleged lowering of standards.

True, that many are not unfamiliar with the lowering of standards due to turning a blind eye to merit in certain cases; however, these constitute not the rule, and therefore, attempts should be made to put an end to them rather than exaggerating, escalating, legalising and granting official sanction to them. In short, it is better late than never to set things right in order to recognise the value of merit on utilitarian and social considerations.

## VI. Conclusion

It is obvious that the incompatibility between rendering compensatory justice to the Blacks and the principle of non-



discrimination of the Whites is unfortunate, and seems to be insoluble. Much can be said in favour of both the principles involved. Hence, the choice before us is not between a right and a wrong. The best that can be done in search of a solution is to attenuate the evil arising out of both the courses.

First of all, the government should scale down the level of "reservation" in colleges and employment. As a step towards it, caste should be taken to weed out the non-victims who constantly attempt to join, by any means, the Affirmative Action category. This is a very difficult task, especially because of the demands of almost every group for preference instead of justice. This difficulty is increased all the more by the emergence of spurious castes and communities in order to gain preferential treatment and the assurance given by politicians to certain "forward castes" on the eve of elections that they will extend preferential treatment to them if they vote for them. As a matter of fact, many groups benefitting from Affirmative Action in the name of "Backward classes" in India are not those who were subjected to injustice in the past. Persons who were unwilling to avail themselves of the opportunities for study should be distinguished from those to whom those opportunities were denied, for the latter can claim for compensatory justice whereas the former cannot.

Secondly the number of places reserved for the favoured groups should not exceed their percentage in the general population of the country. This is stipulated in order to reduce the incidence of Reverse Discrimination as far as possible. As Affirmative Action is practised today in India, reservations are not only as high as 70 per cent but also without any correlation between groups and past injustice. This trend has to be changed. Even in those cases where the correlations between groups and past injury is exact, protective discrimination should be only for the



poor. Assessing economic backwardness even among the Blacks and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is essential because the privileged section of the under privileged society should not be permitted to monopolise the preferential benefits. An economic criterion in the form of family income can be stipulated in order not to be "overinclusive". Moreover, periodical reviews ought to be made primarily to delist the relatively better off individuals among the favoured groups who had attained some progress as a result of the preferential treatment. But total opposition to Affirmative Action cannot be viewed as legitimate, because the atrocious and high degree of discrimination practised against the Blacks in the United States of America and the Harijans of India justifies Affirmative Action, though this may involve Reverse Discrimination of a much lesser degree in comparison with the past discriminatory practices. Without Affirmative Action these Blacks and Harijans will never have equality or human life.

Thirdly, even in filling up the stipulated number of vacancies reserved for the favoured groups, the employers should make special efforts to appoint the Blacks, not only because they are Blacks, but also because they are as qualified as any other applicant. Under no circumstances unqualified Blacks should be hired or promoted. When this criterion is adopted to fill almost every job and not just the 'quota' determined on the basis of their presence in the population, then, it becomes grossly discriminatory and unfair, especially in those thickly populated areas of the world where unemployment is acute.

In this context, it is necessary to interpret the word 'qualifications'. Suppose there are vacancies for the post of clerks in banks. In filling up these vacancies the Blacks are rejected on the ground that they are 'unqualified' or "less qualified" compared to the Whites. But it is pertinent to point out that the Blacks said to be "unqualified or less qualified" are those who



*Affirmative Action and Reverse Discrimination*

possess the qualifications on the basis of which the whites themselves were appointed as clerks in banks ten or fifteen years ago. The point is that these Blacks satisfy the criterion laid down for these posts a few years ago, and that these qualifications are really adequate to perform efficiently the clerical job. Therefore, the expressions "unqualified" or "less qualified" are relative to the growing stiff competition for employment and they do not in any way undermine the efficiency of the Blacks, if they are appointed in spite of these labels. Notwithstanding this, if these Blacks are classified as unqualified, then, it entails the truth that the Whites selected for the same or similar posts in the past are unqualified.

The word "qualification" need not necessarily mean merely the grades secured in the university examinations. Suppose the Blacks, if they are admitted in a medical college, will later on serve the people in remote villages or serve the poor or those sections of the society where the Whites are not interested, where the services of the Whites are not forthcoming in spite of the best efforts of the government. In such cases, the Blacks are better qualified than their rivals, because of their willingness to satisfy an important social need. Hence, the interpretation of "qualifications" should be stretched so as to include the institutional, professional and social needs. However, there can be no relaxation of the basic criterion, namely, they should be able to learn the subjects taught.

As stated already, preferential hiring of less qualified is not justified on two counts. 1) This is unfair to the better qualified whites. 2) It is not wise to entrust public health, defence, law, public works, administration, justice, teaching, etc., to the incompetent. To offset these evils, it can be prescribed that Affirmative Action should aim at improving the capacities of the favoured groups. The government and private agencies ought to conduct



special coaching classes for them and thereby improve their potentialities in order to compete with others either to secure seats in educational institutions or placement in jobs. They should be trained to compete. Past injustice should be the basis of selection of candidates for these training programmes; but competence should be the basis for placement. Though this is still discriminatory against the Whites, because of their exclusion from such programmes, the incidence of Reverse Discrimination is, nevertheless, reduced; furthermore, this takes the wind off the rails of the advocates of meritocracy against Affirmative Action.

Affirmative Action, though inevitable, is an inadequate instrument for compensatory purposes. Other programmes such as the allotment of houses, supply of subsidised food, fuel for cooking, dress materials, health care programmes, governmental allowances etc. should be devised to uplift the most injured and also to spread the burden of compensation fairly on the public at large.

Lastly, but not least in importance, is that Affirmative Action programmes should be only a temporary measure. The preferences should be on the principle of "thus far and no further"; for the aim is to put an end to the need for preference. It should not continue a moment longer than necessary.

Department of Philosophy  
Vivekananda College  
MADRAS-600 004 (T.N.)

S. SAMBASIVAM



*Affirmative Action and Reverse Discrimination*

## NOTES

1. Thomas Nagel, "A Defence of Affirmative Action" in *Ethical Theory and Business*, edited by Tom L. Beauchamp and Norman E. Bowie, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, p. 485.
2. Johnson's Executive Order 11246 is cited in Fagothey's "Right and Reason" in *Ethics in Theory and Practice*, The C. V. Mosley Company, St. Louis, Toronto, London, 1981, pp. 421-422.
3. James Seth, *A Study of Ethical Principles*, William Blackwood and Sons, London, p. 325.
4. Rashdall's view is cited by William Lillie in *An Introduction to Ethics*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1955, p. 317.
5. Thomas Nagel, "A Defence of Affirmative Action" in *Ethical Theory and Business*, p. 485.



## OUR FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION

REGULARITY, NORMATIVITY AND RULES OF  
LANGUAGE AND OTHER ESSAY IN  
PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

Prof. Rajendra Prasad

pp. 325

Rs. 100/-

In this volume twenty essays of Prof. Rajendra Prasad, published earlier in different journals in India and abroad, are collected. In these essays philosophical analysis is brought to bear upon such themes as nature of language, relation between language and philosophy or that between modern logic and philosophy. There are essays in the collection which consider such issues as practical relevance of philosophy, the distinction between apriori and empirical propositions etc. In addition, some essays deal with concepts of substance, mind and religious belief, while some other discuss problems connected with objectivity of historical judgements, relation between man and god, role of reason and sentiment in human life. The last four essays in the collection discuss difficulties connected with philosophical synthesis and consider relation between tradition, progress, freedom, reverence and creativity.

The essays would be immensely helpful to both students and teachers of philosophy.

For further details contact :

The Editor ,  
Indian Philosophical Quarterly ,  
Philosophy Department ,  
University of Poona, Pune 411 007.



## DEATH AND THE MEANING OF HUMAN EXISTENCE:

### *A Phenomenological-existentialist Inquiry*

When we enquire into the meaning of human existence we do not examine an idea or a concept but rather we interpret the various dimensions of human existence such as consciousness, temporality, Being-in-the-world, transcendence and the like which constitute human existence in its totality. Interpretation by its very nature has an orientation, a goal; interpretation participates in the goal of that which is to be interpreted. The question here, therefore, is what is the goal of human existence. It is always *that for the sake of which one lives*, it is that which deserves one's utmost concern, it is the project of one's constant attention. It is one's goal, that makes one's life meaningful. As long as there is a goal, a future, there is meaning in life. This is what Sartre has in mind when he states that life can be made meaningful by means of that which is not (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 687).

The meaning of human existence consists in one's commitment to one's projects, dedication to that for the sake of which one lives. The question is not *what* is it for the sake of which one lives. That could be anything. The point is *how* one lives in relation to that which is one's concern. Even if the duration of the life of how one lives the project is short, by its depth and intensity, it transforms the whole of one's life. One's life that has been spent aimlessly turns out to be a life spent searching for that which concerns oneself. The past then is seen with a new

Received : 17-4-87



insight and the present is seen as directed to the future. This is what happens to Mathieu, Sartre's principal character in his trilogy *Roads to Freedom* who leads an aimless and meaningless life in the *Age of Reason* about which he himself confesses saying; "I am free for nothing", "freedom is a curse upon me". Roquentin in *Nausea* has similar experiences. But towards the end of the trilogy in *Iron in the Soul* Mathieu's life is transformed, he finds his path, he strives hard with all his might and strength towards his project, viz., the struggle for liberation. In other words, it could be said that by applying Sartre's ideas of freedom to concrete situations, as elucidated in his literary works and political actions, he advocates the need for commitment to one's project. Sartre proposes the possibility of discovering the meaning of life within the domain of action. The point which Sartre makes is this: as long as there is a future, a future which manifests itself in radiacally intense commitments and (revolutionary) actions, there is meaning in human existence.

Despite Sartre's assertion that the for-itself can be made meaningful, he makes his claim for which he is popularly known that our life has no meaning. He writes: "if we must die then our life has no meaning because its problems receive no solution and because the meaning of the problems remain undermined" (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 690). This is a remark which is phenomenologically not justifiable. Sartre makes an important distinction between ontology and metaphysics and points out that phenomenology deals only with the ontological, i.e. how-problems, and not with the why-problems. Why-problems are metaphysical in character and they have no definite answers. But phenomenology which deals with how-problems examines the mode of existing of something. This distinction which Sartre made in the context of his enquiries into the origin of Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself enables us to understand



*Meaning of Human Existence*

that in so far as the problem of origin is metaphysical and, therefore, having no locus standi in phenomenology, the problem of the end, viz., death, is also a metaphysical problem and hence does not have a place in phenomenological enquiries. Consequently, phenomenology need not discuss death.

It is on the basis of this distinction that Sartre has been able to delete a large number of insoluble metaphysical questions from the domain of phenomenology. But while asserting the meaninglessness of life, Sartre does not adhere rigorously to this phenomenological insight. The first half of Sartre's above statement can be paraphrased saying that our life has no meaning because we must die. That is, the reason why there is meaninglessness is said to be death. The second half of Sartre's above statement says "because its (life's) problems receive no solution and because the very meaning of the problem remains undermined" are, in fact, the consequences of death. This statement can be reformulated as the problems of life receive no solutions because we must die and the very meaning of the problems remains undermined because we must die. In other words, whatever be the kind of analysis of Sartre's above statement regarding the meaninglessness of life one thing is certain that it appears as an answer to one or the other why-questions. In no way do they describe the manner or the mode of meaninglessness of life. They are in no way answers to any how-problems. Consequently, Sartre's elucidation of the meaninglessness of life appears to be non-phenomenological.

Does Sartre's commitment to phenomenological methodology permit him to indulge in such why problem? Can he propose the solution of a why-problem as an answer to the phenomenological, how-problem? The answer is a definite no. Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* avoided a large number of problems under the pretext of phenomenological ontology stating that his



methodology permits only how-problems and not why-problems. But here is an example where Sartre discards his phenomenological ontology to declare something which is totally inconsistent with his sort of philosophizing. The tending of consciousness to its object (i.e., intentionality) is, in fact, the very tending of life towards its concerns, towards its projects. Life, after all, cannot be separated from living expressed in intending.

Does Sartre have any justification for stating that human existence has no meaning? The angle from which the for-itself is examined in *Being and Nothingness* is that of bad faith. It is this point of a view which forms the basis of Sartre's declaration of the meaninglessness of life. Within the frame-work of *Being and Nothingness* one does not have any liberation from bad faith for it is ingrained in the very structure of consciousness and, consequently, it would not be possible for Sartre to speak of a meaningful life. Sartre's original rejection of Husserl's transcendental ego is intended to restore the pristine spontaneity of consciousness. But by not accepting that toward which one's life and, therefore, one's consciousness tend, which makes life meaningful, Sartre betrays the original spontaneity of consciousness. By accepting the noematic correlate attached to every act of consciousness, Sartre is committed to accept the meaningfulness of life in the sense of having meanings in that life is (minimally) a stream of conscious tendings towards that for the sake of which one lives. But as human freedom is freedom experienced in various activities, one could surely say that the meaning of human existence is the meaning of one's activities. In so far as one's actions have meaning (because they have goals) one's existence also has meaning for one's actions are the modes of one's existence. That towards which tending takes place is the meaning of intentionality. It can also be pointed out that phenomenological method primarily is a search for meaning.



*Meaning of Human Existence*

This being so, can it be used at all to elucidate a phenomenon which Sartre considers to be inherently and constitutionally meaningless?

Is meaning phenomenologically given? Sartre in his *The Transcendence of the Ego*, (p. 35) holds that "phenomenology is the science of fact and its problems are problems of fact". The fact which Sartre examines is human existence and the meaning of this fact is that about which the fact is, viz., that for the sake of which human reality exists. If this is so, then one must hold that meaning is phenomenologically given. The heart of Husserl's notion of the universal is that the meaning of a fact is given along with the fact itself. That the meaning of a fact is inseparable from the very fact itself is the core of Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology as well. These lead us to suggest that in so far as the meaning of a fact is that about which the fact is, one can very well say that the meaning of one's life is that about which one's life is, and that about which one's life is that towards which life tends and this is one's concern, one's project.

From Sartre's point of view while human reality can be made meaningful in terms of its future, it turns out to be meaningless on account of its death. What it means is that due to death, human reality has "no exit" towards a future, its life concentrated in the present is haunted by its past. It is precisely here that Heidegger's treatment of death (Being-towards-death) becomes very significant since he has been able to envisage a future for human existence (i.e., Dasein), but a future which is the possibility of the impossibility of being any more human.

Purely from a phenomenological point of view Heidegger need not discuss death at all in his phenomenology for the streams of experiences, as Husserl points out, with which phenomenology deals, does not have a beginning or an end. What is



meant is that we are aware of ourselves as already having experiences and we cannot be aware of ourselves except in virtue of experience. Consequently, Husserl states that : " the ultimate problems of phenomenology is the explication of the structure of the living present ". He goes on to add that birth and death we know only on the basis of inter-subjectivity. Death appears as a pure pause in the other's life.

Keeping in mind the objections raised both by Husserl and Sartre against a meaningful treatment of the question of death, it could be pointed out that Heidegger is not a phenomenologist simpliciter nor does he limit his philosophical concerns merely to that of Husserl and Sartre. It is his hermeneutic phenomenological elucidation of the ontology of Dasein that makes him look at the problem of death. Heidegger's use of phenomenological concepts like anticipation, projection and horizon in the context of elucidating Being-towards-death shows that Heidegger makes use of phenomenological notions merely as a point of departure for the study of Being-towards-death in his hermeneutic phenomenology. Moreover, it is very interesting to note that the key to Heidegger's elucidation of death is Husserl's assertion that phenomenology considers that which is already in process and its implication. In other words, Heidegger does not consider Being-towards-death as an event occurring at the end of one's life as Husserl and Sartre assume but as a process inbuilt in Dasein ever since its birth. Had Heidegger been considering Being-towards-death as an event occurring chronologically at the end of Dasein's life, it would not have been possible for him to use the phenomenological concept of horizon because there would be no horizon of Dasein once the event of death occurred. For Heidegger Being-towards-death is always in Dasein's horizon. Dasein projects itself into its death by way of anticipation which reveals clearly what Heidegger means by Being-towards-death.



*Meaning of Human Existence*

By anticipating what happens is this : one need not be at the end to realize the end, i.e., the right perspective of the end is achieved not through being at an end but by being towards the end. I need not be at the very end to realize the end but rather my awareness that I am going to die is enough to give me an authentic (owned) approach to my existence as a whole, i.e., the existential awareness of the possibility of ceasing to be is the owned, authentic awareness of death.

A close reading of *Being and Time* reveals that an enquiry into death, in fact, does not seem to be the main concern of Heidegger. The only reason why Heidegger examines death is because it is capable of infusing authenticity into Dasein's existence. Dasein's authenticity consists in anticipation; the culmination of anticipation is death. Why should Heidegger consider death as that which institutes authenticity into Dasein's existence? Both from his Christian background and from the study of Kierkegaard's writings Heidegger realized that nothing ordinary can redeem human existence (from its fallenness) : there needs to be something *momentous* to make life authentic. In contrast to Kierkegaard's religious concern and the elucidation of the momentous within the domain of Christianity, Heidegger's purely philosophical considerations combined with his uncompromising secularism compelled him to search for the momentous within the realms of human reality which is Heidegger's primary concern. If human existence is ordinary and mediocre, i.e., inauthentic or unowned, the momentous must be its opposite, i.e., the very termination of it and this happens in death. Death, therefore, is the scandal par excellence to the ordinary everyday human existence because when it occurs mediocre human existence totally ceases to be. By eliminating mediocrity from human existence, death infuses authenticity into human existence. In so far as death is the phenomenon that is capable of instilling



authenticity by eliminating mediocrity from human existence, death infuses authenticity (the state of being owned) into human existence. In so far as death is the phenomenon that induces authenticity by expelling mediocrity, human existence in its orientation to it must be authentic or owned; hence the close relationship between authenticity and anticipation of death.

One fundamental reason why Heidegger differs from Sartre in elucidating the meaningfulness of human existence by way of Being-towards-death is Dasein's ability to constitute and to discover meaning. From Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenological point of view, man (Dasein) is the meaning-giver, he is the very source of meanings. It being so, man (Dasein) cannot have a meaningless experience. Hermeneutic phenomenology which attempts to discover the meaningfulness of every experience enables Dasein to experience something in so far as it has meaning. The endeavour of Dasein is to discover 'how it is meaningful to me'.

In addition to hermeneutic phenomenology, Kierkegaard's study of acceptance of the inevitable in relation to free choice throws light upon Heidegger's notion of death, for the authentic approach to death according to Heidegger is the free choice and the whole-hearted acceptance of death in spite of the fact that it is inevitable. Kierkegaard points out that by assuming responsibility for what one already is, by choosing freely what one has already become, one becomes one's own creator<sup>1</sup>. What this means for Heidegger is that human reality being finite has to end, has to die. Death being inevitable, ordinarily, it does not make much of a sense to speak of Being free-for-death. One is totally helpless in the face of it. It is for this reason that Sartre's *for-itself* tries to run away from it. But Dasein does not do this. Stimulated by Kierkegaard's contention, Heidegger points out that Dasein chooses its death, Dasein makes itself free-for-death,



*Meaning of Human Existence*

Dasein finds meaning in death (by assigning meaning to it) all of which appear to show that Dasein effects its finitude. This active role of Dasein with regards to its own death opens a new perspective in our understanding of Heidegger's assertion that Dasein chooses itself to be finite, Dasein chooses its own death.

One essential feature of death is its ability to reflect authenticity to the whole of Dasein's existence. What is meant by this is that anticipation of death is what makes Dasein's future authentic. This authenticity, resulting from anticipation, makes not only Dasein's future authentic but rather anticipation of death reflects authenticity back into the past as well as to the present of Dasein, i e., to the whole (existence) of Dasein.

It is possible to compare Heidegger's and Sartre's understanding of meaningfulness and meaninglessness of human existence. From Heidegger's point of view if the ordinary every day human existence is lived in orientation towards death, the momentous, it can become meaningful. But Sartre's point is that it is life's inherent direction towards death that makes it meaningless. The for-itself is constantly engaged in the process of discovering the meaning of its existence (in terms of its actions) in its future. While searching for meaning, reality inevitably encounters death which puts an end to the for-itself. Because the for-itself comes to an end at its death, death terminates its attempts to discover the meaningfulness of existence. Then one can say that death is the most meaningless phenomenon which human reality experiences such that it reflects meaninglessness back into the whole of existence of the for-itself making it totally absurd. In other words, it could be said that because a future which culminates in death is ever ingrained in the for-itself, the for-itself is ever meaningless.

...7



While Sartre's contention regarding the meaninglessness of human existence may not be justifiable phenomenologically, Heidegger's attempt to depict Being-towards-death as the sole source of meaningfulness of human existence may not be very acceptable from an existentialist point of view. Phenomenological study of human existence advocates primarily the meaningfulness of human existence. From a phenomenological and existentialist point of view, human reality is constantly engaged in the process of discovering most personal and subjective meanings. This is because man constitutes meaning and he does so because he is the source of his own meaningfulness. This being so, the meaningfulness of human existence cannot be found exclusively in its orientation towards death, as Heidegger holds. As pointed out in the beginning, human existence is meaningful in terms of its future, on account of its goals, on account of its commitment to that for the sake of which it lives. Human existence turns out to be meaningless not because of death but because it has no goals to achieve, no future to realize.

Death cannot be the phenomenon which encapsulates all possible meaning of human existence (although the meaningfulness of dying for a cause cannot be denied). Death is only a mode of human existence and human existence is more than any one of its modes. Human existence discovers meaning in that for the sake of which it exists. The meaning of human existence cannot be decided on the balance of death; meaning consists in having a future, a goal, a commitment.

Indian Council of Philosophical Research  
USO House, 6, Special Institutional Area  
New Meherauli Road  
NEW DELHI-110 067.

V. C. THOMAS



*Meaning of Human Existence*

## NOTE

1. ".....the individual becomes conscious of himself as this finite individual, with these talents, these dispositions, these instincts, these passions, influenced by these definite surroundings, as this 'definite product of a definite environment. But being conscious of himself in this way, he assumes responsibility for all these..... Thus at the instant of choice he is in the most complete isolation, for he withdraws from the surroundings; and at the same moment he is in absolute continuity, for he chooses himself as a product and this choice is the choice of freedom, so that when he chooses himself as a product, he can just be as well be said to produce himself".

*Either / Or*, Vol. II, (p. 225)



## PROF. S. N. MAHAJAN

We profoundly mourn the sad demise of Dr. S. N. Mahajan, Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Humanities and Social Science at I. I. T., Kanpur, who passed away on 29-12-1988 after a long illness. He was 47.

Born in 1941, Dr. Mahajan had his early education in Punjab. He took Master's degree in Philosophy from University of Punjab in 1962. After teaching at the Baring Christian College, Batala for a few years, Dr. Mahajan went to the University of Hawaii in 1964 as an East West Center scholar and earned his Ph.D. in 1968. He taught Indian Philosophy for sometime at Santa Clara, California and Slippery Rock State College, Pennsylvania. He joined IIT Kanpur in 1970 as a Lecturer in Philosophy. An active researcher and a popular teacher, he earned promotion to Assistant Professor in 1973 and to Professor in 1978.

Dr. Mahajan worked in the areas of Indian, Religious, Social and Political philosophies. In these areas his contribution, both in terms of the courses he designed and taught, and the research he carried out, is a very significant one. He published widely, and the courses he taught were very popular among students.

Dr. Mahajan also contributed actively to the curricular and co-curricular life of the institute. He was mainly responsible for starting Yoga classes in the Institute and had worked for Meditation Centre and Vivekananda Samiti whose aim was to foster inter-religious understanding among the members of the I. I. T. Community.

EDITORS



*Indian Philosophical Quarterly Vol. XVI, No. 2.*  
*April 1989*

DISCUSSION :

SOME PROBLEMS ARISING OUT OF THE CONCEPT OF  
CONSCIOUSNESS  
AS ENVISAGED IN DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Unlike epiphenomenalism, dialectical materialism conceives of consciousness or mind as *somewhat* independent of but in constant dialectical relationship with matter. For the ultimate reality, dialectical materialism assumes only matter—the well-spring of everything material or spiritual; all coming out of it through the “the movement from lower to the higher, from the simple to the complex, as a revolutionary process advancing by leaps from one stage to another.”<sup>1</sup> But the explanation of the phenomenon of consciousness or mind as envisaged in dialectical materialism entails certain difficulties.

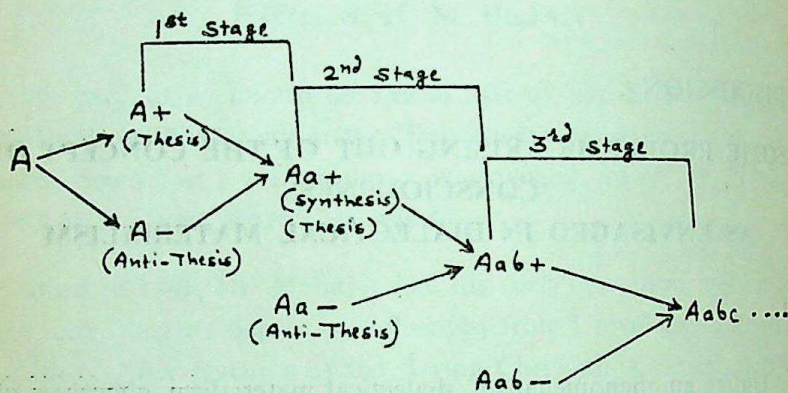
The basic laws of materialist dialectics are the following :

- ( i ) The law of the unity and struggle of opposites.
- ( ii ) The law of the passage of quantitative into qualitative changes.
- ( iii ) The law of negation of negation.

The working of the first and the third laws of the dialectics I may represent thus :

Received : 13-6-87



DIAGRAM NO. 1

In the above diagram (no. 1), at the starting point, there is the primordial matter in which motion inheres (A). This (A) is not neutral; it is an unity of opposites (A+ and A-). In course of time this contradiction (dialectical contradiction and not metaphysical contradiction) widens, such that (A) splits, of its own, into a thesis (A+) and an anti-thesis (A-). It must be noted that (A+) and (A-) are certainly opposites, but, however, they are somehow dialectically united according to the first law of Marx's (or Hegel's) dialectic. These two, i.e. (A+) and (A-) are not only united, but they also happen to be in mutual engagements, according to the third law of the dialectics, so that a new phenomenon occurs (Aa) out of that engagement. Here (a) is a new specific which is added to the former (A). (Aa) is called the synthesis. This is the first stage of the dialectical movement or development.

In the second stage of the dialectical development, (Aa) which in its turn also contains contradiction within itself, splits itself, as if, into two opposing camps—(Aa) which now becomes the thesis (Aa+) and creates from within itself its anti-thesis (Aa-).

Discu

and f  
the sy  
contin  
impor  
move  
that)  
matte  
Acco  
requi  
eviden  
dialec  
being  
such  
worn  
posit  
with  
com  
pole  
diale  
"em  
a m  
said  
by t  
com  
nega  
of t  
succ  
ripe  
the  
seed  
The  
pro



## Discussion

and following the first and the third laws of the dialectics, creates the synthesis (Aab). And in this way the dialectical movement continues until self-consciousness happens to be. It is very important here to note that for all these stages of dialectical movement no external energy (vector, catalyst or something like that) is necessary. This energy is pre-existent in the primordial matter and is enough for all the multiple stages following it. According to Marxism "from the outset *identity with itself* requires *difference from everything else* as its complement, is evident".<sup>2</sup> However, F. Engels cites many an example of the dialectical characteristic of nature. "A magnet", he says, "on being cut through, polarises the neutral middle portion, but in such a way that the old poles remain. On the other hand, a worm, on being cut into two, retains the receptive mouth at the positive pole and forms a new negative pole at the other end with excretory anus; but the old negative (the anus) now becomes positive, becoming a mouth, and a new anus or negative pole is formed at the cut end".<sup>3</sup> Regarding the third law of the dialectics, Marxism, as Lenin said, holds that negation is not an "empty" or "futile" negation; but a moment of connection or a moment of development. Negation of negation, as Afanesyev said, is the "replacement of the old by the new, of the dying by the emergent that constitutes development, while the overcoming of the old by the new that arises out of the old, is called negation".<sup>4</sup> Podosetnik and Yakhot gave a concrete example of this phenomenon: "The growing of crop covers a series of successive periods: the sprouting of the seeds, their growth and ripening, the gathering of the crops. In the course of sprouting the seeds lying in the soil cease their existence, cease being seeds. They undergo negation. New plants grow out from them. They bloom, fertilise and, finally, bear fruit, seeds. The whole process of the growing of crops is a negation of the negation".<sup>5</sup>



*Problem I.* The dialectics contradicts the logical dictum : *ex nihilo nihil fit*. In diagram no. 1 (above), the new quality or specific of (A), i.e. (a) is generated out of (A), (a) being previously absent in (A). How is this possible, logically? If (a) is not previously present in (A), at least potentially, it cannot come out of (A). The quality of water of being hard at the freezing point is certainly present beforehand, and when the appropriate conditions are fulfilled, the potential qualities become actualised. This phenomenon cannot be explained otherwise.

We may profitably refer to the *anekāntavāda* of Jainism : "Every object possesses innumerable positive and negative characters. It is not possible for us, ordinary people, to know all the qualities of a thing.... Human knowledge is necessarily relative and limited and so are all our judgments."<sup>6</sup> The wrangle of contemporary physicists over the nature of matter is a pointer here. Lenin, too, was aware of this fact and so he rightly wrote : "All-sided, universal flexibility of concepts, a flexibility reaching to the identity of opposites — that is the essence of the matter."<sup>7</sup> But, before knowing all the aspects, qualities, attributes or characteristics of matter, how can we be sure about the essence of it? How can we say that the identity harbours within itself (a) was not present in (A) beforehand, at least potentially? And is our knowledge of matter complete even to-day?

*Problem no. II.* Dialectical materialism assumes only two dimensions—affirmation and negation, which are in constant opposition. Why can we not assume, in addition, a *neutrality*? Sir Eddington was aware of this defect of the scene of affirmation and negation. In his *The Nature of the Physical World*, he wrote "I think that that is an example of the limitation of physical schemes that has troubled us before—namely, that in all such schemes opposites are represented by + and —, Past and future,



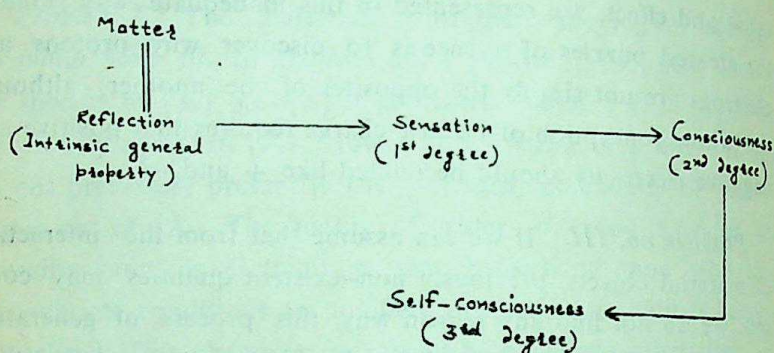
*Discussion*

cause and effect, are represented in this inadequate way. One of the greatest puzzles of science is to discover why protons and electrons are not simply the opposites of one another, although our whole conception of electric charge requires that positive and negative electricity should be related like  $+$  and  $-$ .<sup>8</sup>

*Problem no. III.* If we can assume that from the interaction of material objects, previously non-existent qualities may come out, we do not find any reason why this process of generation of ever newer and newer qualities should stop at a certain stage, say of self-consciousness. Why can it not go even further to a stage which we do not know or cannot conceive of, as yet?

However, the Marxian dialectic does not stop here, it goes on. According to it, in course of the accruing of newer qualities to matter, what has now become organism, through evolution, a very peculiar quality—consciousness—is added to matter". In the course of further evolution, as the organisms themselves and the environment became more complex, an even higher form of reflection sensation, arose on the basis of response to stimuli. Lenin wrote that "sensation transforms the energy of external stimuli into consciousness".<sup>9</sup> And, yet, the evolution did not stop here; it went on ahead until "In the process of labour man acquired not only consciousness, that is the ability to reflect the world around him, but also self-consciousness, that is, the ability to understand and assess his thought and emotions, interests, motives and actions, his place and role in social life".<sup>10</sup> Therefore, "As a product of matter and as its reflection, consciousness does not remain passive, but *actively influences* the world. It is in this sense that Lenin wrote that "man's consciousness not only reflects the objective world, but creates it".<sup>11</sup> We may conveniently represent what has been told above with the help of a diagram as follows :



DIAGRAM NO. 2

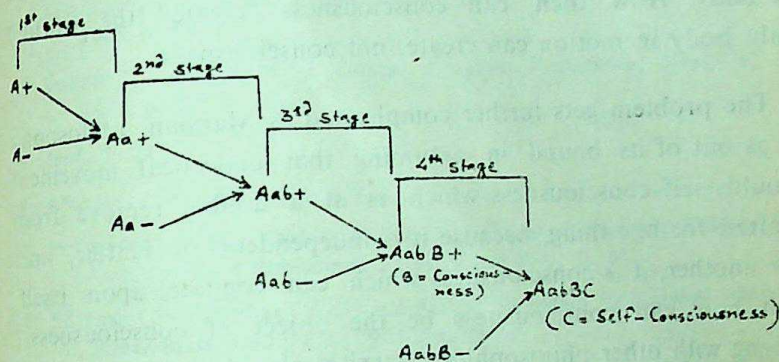
Not only this that consciousness has now arisen out of matter, it has assumed a degree of independence. Because :

- ( i ) " Thought and matter are not the same " <sup>12</sup>
- ( ii ) " Conceiving, thinking and mental intercourse are the ' efflux ' or separate, nonmaterial outflow which originates from material behaviour " . <sup>13</sup> " Notice that Marx is not saying men's conceiving, thinking, and mental intercourse are nothing but their material behaviour. He is saying that they are the ' efflux ' i.e., a separate nonmaterial outflow which originates and derives from material behaviour " . <sup>14</sup>
- ( iii ) " Consciousness can create something of its own " . <sup>15</sup>
- ( iv ) " Consciousness can reflect upon itself ( self-consciousness ) " . <sup>16</sup>

And this independence has conferred upon consciousness a special status among all other attributes of matter coming out of it in course of dialectical progression. We may represent the idea of the origination of consciousness and self-consciousness in the following diagram :



## Discussion

DIAGRAM NO. 3

**Problem no. IV.** When an independent status is secured for consciousness, Jerome A. Shaffer is right in saying that Marxian philosophy is "not materialistic in our sense".<sup>17</sup> The materialistic basis of Marxist philosophy then falls apart.

**Problem no. V.** Why, for example in diagram no. 3, at the third stage AabB comes out (B=consciousness) instead of Aabc (a, b, c being ordinary specifics or attributes)? Is B (or consciousness) matter or simply a quality? According to Marxism, the answer is, Neither. If none of these two, what, then, is it? Marxism has left consciousness to be something mysterious.

**Problem no. VI.** Consider the two statements of Marxism :

- (i) "Thought is a property, a mode of existence, of the body, the same as its extension, i.e., as its special configuration and position among other bodies".<sup>18</sup>
- (ii) "Thinking is not the *product* of an action but the *action itself*, considered as the moment of its performance, just as walking, for example, is the mode of action of the legs, the 'product' of which, it transpires, is the space walked".<sup>19</sup>



In either case, thinking or consciousness is quite dependent on the body. How then, can consciousness 'create' the world? Only body in motion can create, not consciousness.

The problem gets further complicated as Marxian philosophy steps out of its bound in assuming that dialectical movement moulds self-consciousness which is at a double remove from matter; for one thing, because it is independent of matter, and for another, it is consciousness which can cogitate upon itself. But, how can consciousness be the object of consciousness? Along with other philosophies, Marxism also has to solve this problem.

*Problem no. VII.* Marxism stops at the stage of self-consciousness and claims that consciousness (as well as self-consciousness) come out of matter in dialectical progression. But can this not be reversed? Can we not say that matter itself is coming out of consciousness? Can the chronological order be changed? Why is matter prior to consciousness? What is the logic behind such an assumption?

Marxism has yet to solve all these problems.

Philosophy Department

Raiganj College,

RAIGANJ-733 134

West Dinajpur (W. B.).

SUNIL KUMAR SARKAR



## Discussion

## NOTES

1. Afanasyev, V., *Marxist Philosophy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968, p. 85.
2. Engels, F., *Dialectics of Nature*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 215.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
4. Afanasyev, V., *op. cit.*, p. 119.
5. Podosetnik, V. and Yakhov, D., *A Brief Course of Dialectical Materialism*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, no date, p. 84.
6. Sharma, Chandradhar, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, etc., 1964, pp. 50-51.
7. Omelyanovsky, M. E. (ed), *Lenin and Modern Natural Science*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 64.
8. Eddington, Sir A. S., *The Nature of the Physical World*, Cambridge University Press, 1953, p. 64.
9. Afanasyev, V., *Marxist Philosophy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968, p. 78.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
14. Shaffer, Jerome A., *Philosophy of Mind*, Prentice-Hall, 1968, pp. 39-40.
15. Afanasyev, V., *op. cit.*, p. 83.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
17. Shaffer, Jerome A., *op. cit.*, p. 40.
18. Ilyenkov, E. V., *Dialectical Logic*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 32.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 35.



## BOOKS RECEIVED

Nandy Ashis (ed); *Science, Hegemony and Violence : A Requiem for Modernity*: 1988, Oxford, Delhi; pp. 301; Rs. 200/- (HC).

Sharma, Shubhra; *Life in the Upanishads*, 1985, Abhinav Publications, Delhi; pp xiii + 242; Rs. 80/- (HC).

Singh, L. P. and Sirisena, B. M.; *Zen Buddhism*, 1988, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, Delhi; pp. xiv + 155; Rs. 150/- (HC).

Sondhi, Madhuri and Walker, Mary M.; *Ecology, Culture and Philosophy*, 1988, Abhinav Publications, Delhi; pp. xviii + 188, Rs. 130/- (HC).

Tahtinen Unto; *Indian Traditional Values*, 1983; Abhinav Publications; Delhi; pp. vii + 103, Rs. 50/- (HC).



Statement about Ownership and Other Particulars about  
Newspaper *INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY*

FORM IV (RULE 8)

1. Place of Publication ... Philosophy Department,  
University of Poona,  
Pune-411 007.
2. Periodicity of its Publication. ... Quarterly.
3. Printer's Name and Address ... Dr. Surendra Sheodas Barlingay,  
Philosophy Department,  
University of Poona,  
Pune-411 007.

Whether Citizen of India ... Yes.

4. Publisher's Name and Address ... Dr. Surendra Sheodas Barlingay,  
Philosophy Department,  
University of Poona,  
Pune-411 007.

Whether Citizen of India ... Yes.

5. Editor' Names and Address ... ( i ) Dr. Surendra Sheodas  
Barlingay,  
Philosophy Department,  
Poona University,  
Pune-411 007.  
  
( ii ) Dr. Rajendra Prasad,  
Opposite Stadium main gate  
Premchand path  
Rajendra Nagar  
Patna-800 016.



(iii) Dr. M. P. Marathe,  
Philosophy Department,  
Poona University,  
Pune-411 007.

(iv) Dr. Mrinal Miri,  
Philosophy Department,  
N. E. H. U.,  
Shilong-793 003.

(v) Dr. R. Sundara Rajan,  
Philosophy Department,  
Poona University,  
Pune-411 007.

(vi) Dr. S. S. Deshpande,  
Philosophy Department,  
Poona University,  
Pune-411 007.

Whether Citizens of India ... Yes.

6. Names and Addresses of ... Department of Philosophy,  
Individuals/Institutions Poona University,  
which own the newspaper Pune-411 007.  
And its  
Pratap Centre of Philosophy,  
Amalner-425 401.

I, Surendra Sheodas Barlingay, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/- Surendra Sheodas Barlingay.



April 1989

## BOOK-REVIEW

*AN INTERPRETATION OF EXISTENCE*: Joseph Owens.  
Houston, Texas: Center for Thomistic Studies, University of  
St. Thomas. 1987. pp. 153.

Admittedly the concept of existence presents a great deal of difficulty in analysis mainly because it is empty of content, and to attempt an interpretation of existence would border on redundancy. Yet this closely argued essay by Father Owens is deeply reasoned and merits much serious study. Although the nature of existence has, it is claimed, been pushed aside in Western philosophical thought, the issue is here taken firmly in hand in order to arrive at some understanding of a type of existence that may be knowable from the observables of experience and arrived at through the powers of reasoning. The book is set out in six well-defined chapters beginning in chapter one with the Problem of Existence. The interpretation of existence is rightly said to be more than only an interesting philosophical problem in the abstract, because as Heidegger has observed, existence is not just a word for which there is as yet no clear meaning, but it is of such serious import as to hold within its grasp the spiritual destiny of the West.

It is in chapter two that an attempt is made to come to grips with the notion of existence itself although it is never pretended that its full meaning can yet be measured. It is repeatedly claimed

Received : 13-6-87

... 8



that an understanding of how a thing exists, while acknowledged to be an intellectual endeavour, must be reached not through conceptualization alone but always and in all cases through the intellectual activity of judgment. Judgment, then, for Owens is the intellectual activity by which the existence of a thing is or becomes known, a basic contention that is never abandoned throughout the course of the book. Existence is seen as a synthesizing process which progresses from past to future in any place and at any time. Full and real existence is more than simply the object represented in imagination, although a picturing of the objecting in the mind does, it is conceded, allow the object some lesser form of existence. Even hypothetical existence is also nonetheless a form of existence whereby the object is by some authorities said to subsist rather than to exist. Owens, on his part, in general seems to subscribe to an interpretation of existence which allows that any object may, at various levels, be freely brought by means of human cognition to some given state of perfection. A number of objections which might be brought against the legitimacy of the cognitive approach are readily countered by pointing out that only in this way can the mind be made ready to bestow a new and dynamic form of existence upon the given object, making it causally effective in the ongoing process of its development.

Having first barely confronted the issue of existence, chapter three moves on to try to draw out some of the characteristics which existence might possess. We are searching here for universal qualities, that is to say, all those shared characteristics common to individual existent things. In brief, existence requires an identity, but we might have first looked into all the identities which it is possible for existence to covertly possess until we could say in the very weak sense of possibility that it is not logically impossible for a thing not to exist as well as to exist. Such a con-



*Book-Review*

sideration the author scarcely investigates in his concern to establish a positive form of existence that is constantly undergoing synthesis in actual human experience. In any case, in a sense that is very basic to it, existence must cling to some form of substantive reality, and since it is thus considered to be prior to a thing's nature, existence can hardly be said to be the property of a thing in the ordinary sense. While existence is never spared the possibility of making use of the model of bare conceptualization, existence is again branded as no empty concept. The order of categories alone will not yield full-bodied existence. But granting that existence must possess a animal self-existence indispensable to its further development, the author is more than willing to bestow upon existence a categorical and hence from there an epistemological role without leaving existence devoid of the spontaneous synthesizing power of judgment.

In the next section the delicate issue of what maintains existence in its very own state of existence is probed, an investigation which takes us to no less than the point of asking what it is that preserves existence always in its continuing state of objective reality. In casting about for an answer there is no need to look for any help from rules, for laws are known not to furnish causal solutions. A prime cause for existence, or that upon which existence depends in order to exist, seems to call for some sort of metaphysical priority inhering in the subject rather than only a temporal priority, since existence must never find itself in separation from its own supportive state of subsistent existence. Owens understandably believes that the problem must be tackled from at least two levels of thinking, namely, from the point of view of the thing's accidental nature and also from the point of view of the thing's inner nature involving that type of subsistent existence whose nature it is to exist in and for itself alone. Clearly, to declare for an ultimate cause for existence in this



manner is to resort to metaphysical rather than empirical reasoning and not only opens the way to language that takes on a metaphorical colouring but also can lead to a dogmatism in the interests of whatever doctrine lies ready at hand to be promoted. Despite the possibility that in metaphysical endeavours it may be our aim largely to find ways of absolving ourselves from the tyranny imposed by nature's causal laws, a possibility which he apparently ignores, it is more than obvious that Father Owens is at pains to identify primary subsistent being with a primary efficient cause which he continuously emphasizes as the key factor in explaining how a thing is made to continue in its present state of existence and indeed in accounting for the thing's very existence in the first place. It seems unfortunate that efficient causality is stressed to the exclusion of any mention of an Aristotelian final cause which is surely also of prime importance in declaring for the ongoing progress of any existent thing in its development toward a rational end. Where on the one hand we are assured, in Owens' account, of the existence of everyday observable objects, and from such premises of original existence the reasoning is carried simply into the mystery of what is called the nature of existence as found in subsistent existence supported by sufficient causation, the argument is either circular or deliberately equivocates on the meaning of the term 'existence', rather to the detriment of a full understanding of existence itself, the very nature of which we set out to explore.

When in the next chapter the discussion turns to an in-depth account of the bestowal of existence, the term 'bestowal' will come to mean the actual bestowal of existence upon things as they are observed in the real world of phenomena. Important to the author's overall interpretation of existence is his belief that an inner subsistent existence alone is unable to bestow what may be called a full existence upon all the things that might be met



with in observable experience such that in our investigations it will be necessary to reason from observations said in sensible experience to that which is contained in subsistent existence than from an inner existence to the observables. The argument is strengthened by the claim that the perfection and hence the freedom of subsistence offers no framework from which to determine any sequence of existing events. The bestowing of existence is therefore taken to mean not alone the sharing of a basic common form, but also to mean that natures 'different from subsistent existence are made to actually exist', for the existence that is imparted to something must never be identical with that which is made to only subsist within itself. Owens leads us into some confusion when he avows that a finite existence bestowed on something other than itself is limited by that which is knowable according to the thing's nature, whereas he has just previously claimed that the nature of existence remains entirely unknown to the human mind. Unless it is intended to be read with ambiguity it is apparent that two different senses of 'nature' have become involved, viz, a nature that becomes apparent in the phenomenally real world and a nature that subsists outside of experience altogether.

Owens speaks of each new existence as a potency which limits actual existence into producing something 'other', that is, the existence of this or that finite object, but he will not admit that a material substratum need be presupposed as a prime condition for the thing becoming objectively real, either in the disposition of its several properties in its going out of existence or in the bestowal of a new seminal identity upon a thing in its coming into existence. This departure from Aristotle's teaching points up the fact that Owens believes that existence, real or cognitional, is simply bestowed upon a thing which otherwise has no being unless or until its subsistent mode of existence is presupposed.



It is maintained, rightly it would seem, that subsistent existence must act as an agent in producing a new effect, that is that all things coming into existence must originate with the activity of subsistent being, although, as we have already noted, it was claimed that it is not possible to begin our reasoning process from only subsistent existence as a premise. In order to produce the whole of observable existence act of judgment, Owens opts for at least two types of causation, a first cause and a secondary cause, each operating from its own point of departure and with the concurrence of both at different levels. Cognitive existence must always be enacted according to a secondary cause, yet it is never conceded that subsistent existence, with which is identified primary causation, is anything less than completely identified with real existence at every spontaneous moment of the thing's actual existence. Subsistent existence never remains simply an inoperative 'ground of being'. When Owens puts forth the notion that primary efficient cause never remains inactive at any moment of a thing's existence and that there is also an ongoing secondary cause concurring and ready to continuously bestow new modes of existence upon thing in question, it is his way of saying that the doctrine of creationism and the scientific hypothesis of evolution combine in intellectual harmony to complement each other in rendering a more complete and full understanding of reality.

The final chapter attempts to penetrate still deeper into the meaning of existence, although such meaning cannot help but possess a certain consanguinity with the beliefs that have already either been spelled out or implied. Owens sometimes surprisingly talks as if his argument unfolds from strictly observational premises, an empirical point of departure that any metaphysician would surely not want to long entertain. But the strength of his presentation is that subsistent being is acknowledged as playing



*Book-Review*

a central role in any account of existence, and its weakness is that subsistent being is too readily shaded into some form of real existence with the result that it becomes all too easy to blend being with existence and to offer no distinction between the two. No attempt is made to explain how the time factor enters into existence from a state of pure being, a noumenal realm outside of time and space altogether. In any event, at any of its various levels, real existence is never obtained by cognitive existence alone, for existence cannot be genuinely arrived at without cognition through the power of human judgment, as Owens reiterates. But by virtue of our ability to exercise cognitional existence, the individual, from his essentially finite state of existence is nevertheless seen to be placed ultimately in that exalted state where he may achieve a direct relationship with infinite being. Not without paradox it is insisted that all limiting factors must be excluded from the concept of existence in order that an existence known to subsist in itself may be accessible for a basic understanding of the principles involved in affording us freedom in any present state of conscious existence.

The overall aim of *An Interpretation of Existence* is not to deduce existence from basic premises, nor yet to define existence in meaningful terms other than existence, but, simply as the title indicates, to lend some understanding to the concept of existence by way of delineating manageable procedure that may be followed in coming to grips with the issues involved. We might like eventually to discern any object that existence might have or what it is that existence itself possesses as to content, if indeed existence as such may be said to possess any content at all that may be predicated of it. If with Meinong (p. 38n) we wish to say there is not the slightest doubt that the object of knowledge need not exist at all, we are confronted with the paradox that



the content we thought existence might have does not after all exist, so that we have an existence that does not exist, or at least cannot be so designated to exist as an object of knowledge. But Father Owens is never in doubt that the techniques for handling the problems associated with imponderables such as existence, essence, substance and causation remain creatively alive, although often neglected in the late twentieth century. The secret of existence itself, an existence which appears to have no discernible reference and which carries a meaning which cannot be readily fathomed is not soon disposed to relinquish either the mystery it contains or its hold upon the imagination of mankind. Whether overtly admitted or not, the logic behind the present essay assures us that this is the case. Owens, after all, tries to take an eclectic approach in his interpretation of existence, sweeping through a broad historical spectrum from Greek philosophy to existentialism, and is ready to utilize, if necessary, the techniques that are available in analytic philosophy and modern logic. Owens' study could be taken almost as a critique, not of existence, but of the voice of judgment brought to bear upon existence, which amount, to saying that there can be no final engagement with, and no final resolution of, the problems associated with existence so long as self-doubt lingers as an indispensable characteristic of our ongoing human experience.

59, Victor Street  
London, Ontario, Canada  
N6C 1B9

ALBERT W. J. HARPER



*LIFE MEMBERS ( INDIVIDUAL )*

268. Dr. Prabhakar Mishra,  
Philosophy Department,  
Nav Nalanda Mahavihar,  
NALANDA 803 111 (Bihar).
269. Prof. Aminul Haque,  
L/3, Tarabag,  
Burdwan 713 104  
( West Bengal ).
270. Dr. N. Gnanakumaran,  
Philosophy Department,  
University of Jafna,  
Thirunelveli,  
JAFNA (Sri Lanka).



THE

In  
over  
the I  
who  
phys  
For  
able  
trad  
to b  
Bud  
sop  
mus  
con

I  
the  
aris  
tha  
ego  
dit  
ass

ter  
ce  
ho  
R



July 1989

## BUDDHIST PROCESS ETHICS : DISSOLVING THE DILEMMAS OF SUBSTANTIALIST METAPHYSICS

In sharp juxtaposition to the multifarious doctrinal disputes over the teachings of the Buddha is the consensual portrayal of the Enlightened One as an ethical teacher of the first order; one who, having realized the Dharma, is "not interested in metaphysical truths *per se* but in the ethical transformation of man."<sup>1</sup> For the Western philosopher, confronted as he is by the remarkable degree of disagreement and disarray within his own ethical tradition, the fertile grounds of Buddhist philosophy would seem to be a land of opportunity and promise.<sup>2</sup> Yet in turning to Buddhism, one must avoid the imposition of one's own philosophical categories and assumption on the other tradition. One must first establish conceptual correlates. In other words, are we concerned with the same issues?

I will argue that, while the Buddha is confronted by many of the same dilemmas which confound Western ethicists, his response arises from a radically different philosophical perspective than that of most of his Western counterparts. The doctrines of non-egoity (*anattā*), momentariness (*kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-vāda*) and conditioned origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*) challenge fundamental assumptions undergirding Western ethics.

Thus, the main task will be to articulate Buddhist ethics in terms of an immanent philosophy of process rather than a transcendental philosophy of substance or essence. To set the stage, however, I will in the first section provide a thumbnail sketch

Received : 17-4 87



of the substantialism and essentialism which underlies much of Western philosophy—as well as, I shall argue, the *Upaniṣad* tradition—and, in so doing, draw out some of its more important ethical implications. Next, I will demonstrate how the doctrines of non-egoity, momentariness and conditioned origination appear at first glance, at least when read through the tinted lenses of substantialist metaphysics, to undermine many central ethical notions. I will then in the main section show how process philosophy renders the objections raised by opponents of Buddhism—that it denies moral agency, effaces ethical autonomy and repudiates the identity of the moral agent necessary for ethical responsibility—null and void. It is not that Buddhism resolves such metaphysical conundrums as free will *versus* determinism, the identity or lack of identity of the ethical agent and so forth, but that they are non-starters within the Buddhist framework. They are not concerns for the Buddha—not because he is uninterested in these metaphysical issues *qua* metaphysics—but because for him stating the issues in such terms is simply wrong-headed; only faulty assumptions lurking behind a philosophy of static substances and permanent essences could give rise to these specious difficulties. Once one understands how the doctrines of non-egoity, momentariness and conditioned origination counter such a philosophy, these problems no longer arise; they are not solved, they dissolve.

#### A. *The Bias of Transcendental Substantialism : its Ethical Implication*

With some notable exceptions, Western philosophy has been founded on a metaphysics of substance rather than of process; it has emphasized being rather than becoming, things rather than events, permanent essences rather than transitory attributes.<sup>3</sup> Epistemologically, philosophy of this kind seeks the Truth—*episteme* rather than *pistis* or *doxa*; metaphysically, it is con-



cerned with Reality and correspondence to Reality whether understood rationally *a la* Plato, Kant and Russell or empirically as with Hobbes, Locke and Hume; ethically, it seeks Absolute Good rather than conditional good. The attempt has been to ground philosophy in some transcendental source of permanent being or absolute principle.<sup>4</sup> The individual is separated from the Forms, from God, from the Noumenal which represent ultimate value—be it Truth, the Good or the Real. Correlate to this bifurcation is the generation of dualisms: theory, whether the contemplative life of the elite Greeks or the disinterested rational reflection of Descartes, takes precedence over practice; the body is subordinated to the mind; the subject is juxtaposed to the object; science reigns over and against aesthetics; fact is cut off from value; “is” wants connection to “ought”.

With this cleaving of the subject from the object, of the person from the source of value, ethics in the West, since the Enlightenment, has come to be construed in terms of universal moral responsibility—the obligations and duties—and moral freedom—the universalizable rights—of moral agents. The attempt to ground one's ethical order in the secure and permanent foundations of absolute value has led many to the notion of an ahistorical, universal moral law. The quest has been, *a la* Kant, for overarching moral principles binding for every discrete moral agent. Moreover, it is generally argued that for ethics to get off the ground, these moral agents must be autonomous individuals. That is, moral responsibility (indeed any kind of responsibility) is contingent upon freedom; one is held morally culpable only for those actions for which he is able to exercise choice. To the extent that one's ability to choose is negated by coercion, by external factors beyond one's control, one is absolved from blame.<sup>5</sup> Even such an atrocious act as killing a baby is exempt from moral censure if it is the result of a defect in the steering



wheel such that the driver lost control over the vehicle and inadvertently crashed.

*The Ethical Challenge : Do the Doctrines of Non-egoity, Conditioned Origination and Momentariness Undermine Ethics ?*

The doctrine of *anattā*—nonself, soullessness, non-egoity—would seem to call into question one of the primary concerns of Western ethics—the moral agent. The question arises, 'Who is morally responsible? Who is it that acts?' As Sharma notes, it appears that Buddhism "admits action without agent, transmigration without a transmigrating soul."<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the doctrine of conditioned origination, at first glance, appears to undercut the ethical requirement of autonomy. In that one's actions are all conditioned, one is not free to act as he chooses. One's actions are determined by, are dependent upon, arise from, the conditions. Given conditioned origination, it is not a matter of acting but reacting. Acting presupposes choice; reacting does not. If one is confronted by a stimulus and involuntarily moves, it is reaction. Reactions differ from actions in that one cannot be held responsible for one's reaction. Thus, the ethical question becomes not only 'who acts?' but 'can one act?'—at least can one act in a way that allows for moral responsibility? Finally, the doctrine of momentariness not only appears to frustrate the Western ethical project but would seem to subvert any ethical system. As Sharma alarmingly proclaim, "Momentariness is inconsistent with the ethical life and with spiritual experience... The momentary idea which performs an action vanishes without reaping its fruit, and another momentary idea reaps the fruit of an action it never performed. The ethical theory of *Karma* is thrown overboard."<sup>7</sup> Ethical responsibility assumes the continuity of the ethical agent.

It is important to note that the ethical concerns generated by these three doctrines are not entirely peculiar to Western ethics.



*Buddhist Process Ethics*

The same charges are levelled against the Buddhist sage Nāgasena by King Milinda who represents the orthodox Hindu system of the *Upaniṣads* :

"How is your reverence called? What is your name?"

"Your Majesty, I am called Nāgasena...it is nevertheless, your majesty, but a way of counting, a term, an appellation, a convenient designation, a mere name, this Nāgasena; for there is no ego here to be found."

"Bhante, Nāgasena, if there is no ego to be found, who is it then...keeps the precepts? Who is it applies himself to meditation? Who is it realizes the Paths, the Fruits, and *nirvāṇa*? Who is it destroys life? Who is it that takes what is not given to him? Who is it commits immorality? ...In that case, there is no merit; there is demerit; there is no one who does or causes to be done meritorious or demeritorious deeds; neither good nor evil deeds can have any fruit or result. Bhante, Nāgasena, neither is he a murderer who kills a priest, nor can you priests...have any teacher, preceptor, or ordination."<sup>8</sup>

Several points are notable here. First, Milinda observes that the doctrine of momentariness taken literally would make it impossible to blame a murderer for his heinous crime. The person who committed the murder would not be the same person standing before the judge. The murderer exists, as it were, only in the moment of murdering. The problem is exacerbated by the notion of *anattā*. Not only is the murderer not the same agent who can be held responsible for the deed, there is no agent. If there is no agent, who commits the murder? It would seem that there is a murder without a murderer, but how could this be? Thirdly, and significantly, the possibility of there being permanent moral laws or principles is questioned. If everything is momentary, in



flux, changing, then how can moral precepts be considered as permanent ?<sup>9</sup>

In light of these objections, one must wonder about the characterization of the Buddha as a distinguished ethical teacher. It would appear that he has undermined the foundations upon which any ethical edifice could conceivably be constructed. *Anattā* seems to deny selves; but if there are no selves, how can there be moral agents? Momentariness seems to disallow identity; but without identity, how can there be any ethical responsibility? Conditioned origination seem to render freedom illusory; but without freedom, how can ethics get off the ground?

*B. The Buddhist Response : Anattā, Conditioned Origination and Momentariness as a Philosophy of Process Rather than Substance*

Before condemning Buddhism to the ethical dunghap, one must reconsider the Buddha's position from a perspective which does not impose the substantialist and essentialist presuppositions which prevail in Western philosophy, and, as attested to by Milinda, in some Indian systems as well. To understand the doctrines of *anattā*, conditioned origination and momentariness, Buddhism must be viewed as a reaction to the tradition of the *Upaniṣads* which identified the Self with the Ultimate Reality, *Ātman* with *Brahman* : *tat tvam asi*—thou art that. Kenneth Inada depicts the *Upaniṣad* tradition as "aim[ing] at an ontological absolute of being."<sup>10</sup> *Brahman* is the ultimate, the absolute, the locus of all value and the ground of Truth. While the self is illusory, contingent, transient and ephemeral, *Brahman* is permanent, unchanging; eternal. Only when the self realizes that it is *Brahman* does it attain salvation. But if all is eternal *Brahman*, then how does one account for the changing empirical world? For the empirical self? When the self realizes it is *Brahman*, does it cease to be or does the Self become eternal? It is against this identity of the Self with *Brahman* and the con-



*Buddhist Process Ethics*

sequent metaphysical dilemma of eternalism/substantialism (*śāśvatavāda*) or annihilation/nonsubstantialism (*ucchedavāda*) that the thrust of the Buddha's insights are directed.

*Anattā*

The Buddha specifically denies both eternalism and the annihilation of the self :

If I, Ānanda, when the wandering monk Vachchhagotta asked me, "Is there the ego?" had answered : "The ego is", then that Ānanda, would have confirmed the doctrine of the Śāmaṇas and the Brāhmaṇas who believe in permanence. If I, Ānanda, when the wandering monk asked me : "Is there the ego?" had answered : "The ego is not," then that would have confirmed the doctrine of the Śāmaṇas and the Brāhmaṇas who believe in annihilation... He who holds that there is no ego is a man with false notions... He who holds that there is an eternal ego is [likewise] a man with false notions. <sup>11</sup>

Hence the ethical concerns which followed from the literal interpretation of *anattā* as a denial of the self are unfounded. It is not a denial of the phenomenological self—the self as becoming—but of a substantial, essentialistic self—the self as static being :

There is no corporeality whatever, O monks, no feeling, no perception, no disposition, no consciousness, that is permanent, everlasting, eternal, changeless and identically abiding forever. <sup>12</sup>

Buddha, to be sure, is not denying the phenomenal reality of the empirical world. Corporeality, feelings, perceptions, dispositions, consciousness exist. It is just that they exist as part of a ongoing process of conditioned becoming rather than as static, independent elements of permanent being. As pointed out by K. N. Upadhyaya, the Buddha disparages the conceit of the



self which construes itself as the ultimate reality, as something permanent, unchanging, immutable :

I (self) and mine not being truly and really discovered, is it not, monks, a perfectly foolish doctrine to hold the point of view, 'this is the world, this is self; permanent, abiding eternal, immutable shall I be after death, in eternal identity shall I persist?' <sup>13</sup>

Hence the doctrine of *anattā*, in its repudiation of the self-as-static-being, entails the rejection of the metaphysics of the *Upaniṣads*: "it was not a simple overturn of the *ātman* concept into nullity but a unique overhaul of the understanding of human experience." <sup>14</sup> Though Buddha rejected the metaphysics of the *Upaniṣads* along with the substantial, essential, permanent self that this metaphysics generated, he was careful not to do away with the self. He was aware that the nihilistic interpretation of *anattā* would repudiate ethics, that it is, as Upadhyaya summarily observes not only "philosophically absurd" but "ethically reprehensible." <sup>15</sup> He is reported to have said :

"Never brahmin, have I seen or heard of such an avowal, such a view. Pray, how can one step onwards, how can one step back, yet say : 'There is no self-agency; there is no other agency?' What think you Brahmin. is there such a thing as initiation."

"Yes, sir"

"... Well, brahmin, since there is initiative, and men are known to initiate, this is among men the self-agency, this the other agency". <sup>16</sup>

Thus, Buddha rebuffs the notion of a permanent, independent ontological self without relinquishing moral agency. <sup>17</sup> Conditioned as we are by the biases of philosophies of static substances, it is hard to imagine what this self could be like. We are at a loss



*Buddhist Process Ethics*

much as was Hume when, in searching for the self, he failed to locate it :

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. <sup>18</sup>

We have the idea of the self, and so we think there must be some ontological referent, some discrete sense particular in the world, which corresponds to and gives rise to this idea. But what causes this impression ?

For from what impression cou'd this idea be deriv'd ? ... It must be some one impression, that gives rise to every real idea. But self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our impression and ideas are suppos'd to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, thro' the whole course of our lives; since self is *suppos'd* to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. <sup>19</sup>

The key to curing the dis-ease occasioned by our inability to discover the substance, the essence, of the self underlying our perception is found in the Buddha's reply to Vaccha. He has become confused by Buddha's "four-cornered" negation. The Buddha denies that any of the metaphysical theories—that the priest is reborn; that he is not reborn; that he is both reborn and not reborn; that he is neither reborn nor not reborn—fit the case. It is not that he denies that they are true, but that they are inappropriately conceived; they entail unacceptable metaphysical assumptions. To illustrate his point, the



Buddha uses the example of the extinction of a fire. He asks Vaccha :

"On what does this fire that is burning in front of you depend ?"

"It is on fuel of the grass and wood that this fire... depends. '

"[If the fire goes extinct and then] someone were to ask you, 'In which direction has the fire gone—east or west or north or south ?' what would you say, O Vaccha ?"

"The question would not fit the case, Gotama".<sup>20</sup>

To apply the category of direction in this case is inappropriate. Similarly, imposing the metaphysical biases of substantialism on the question of the self leads to confusion. The Buddha could no more provide an answer to the annihilation *versus* eternalism quandary than he could tell us in which direction the fire went. The questions are framed in terms which are inappropriate, not true or false. One must give up the assumptions of the metaphysics, including the notion of a static self-as-being and look at experience in terms of a process ontology.

*Momentariness and Process Ontology : The Self as Becoming*

Though Hume was led to the same kinds of reflections and doubts about the existence of a substantial self as the Buddha, the consequences were quite different. Hume adopted the Lockean theory of experience in which the subject was separated from the object. The subject was a passive observer, a disinterested receptacle, a blank slate upon which the external objects made their impressions. Each impression arose from discrete bits of sense datum which comprised the external world. The mind, having copied the sense datum, supplied the connections and relations between them. But as D. C. Mathur notes, "reflective introspec-



*Buddhist Process Ethics*

tion revealed to Hume that the mind was nothing but a series of disjointed impressions and ideas with no 'real' relations between them. Such an experience revealed, according to Hume, no permanently subsisting self".<sup>21</sup> Thus Hume, like Gotama, came to see reality as a flux :

I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity and are in a perpetual flux and movement... There is no *simplicity* in it at any time, nor *identity* in different."<sup>22</sup>

Everything is impermanent, changing, momentary. However, it is interesting to remark, as Mathur does, that "having discovered no permanent self and having explained away the notion of personal identity, Hume ..gives expression to feelings of melancholy, despair and doubt...These feelings are in sharp contrast to the feelings of release, liberation, and *nirvāṇic* peace experienced by the historical Buddha at his discovery of and insight into the nature of things in general and the self in particular".<sup>23</sup> Hume falls prey to this melancholy, whereas the Buddha does not, because he feels, firstly, that the self has been cut off from the world, from the Real, from Truth, from the ground of value. The self is merely a passive copier of sense particulars. There is no causal connection between the relations the mind supplies and the real world of sense data. This obviates initiative and moral effort. But more importantly, when the self as well as reality is looked upon as momentary, as a flux of discrete particulars lacking a causal connection—that is, when the self is understood to be impermanent and lacking in identity—then moral responsibility itself seems impossible. Who is it that can be held responsible? Thus he resorts to the construction of a "feigned" or "fictitious" self on the basis of associations,



contiguities and similarities in order to allow for moral responsibility, for "human commerce".<sup>24</sup>

But this despair arises only if one begins with the presuppositions of an eternal, substantial self. It is not the momentary, self-in-the-process-of-becoming that is fictitious, it is the myth propagated by the *Upaniṣads* and empiricist philosophers of an essentialistic, permanent self which is the imaginary projection. But giving up this fanciful creation need not occasion ethical angst. Indeed, quite the contrary. It is precisely the myth of the permanent self which gives rise to the conceit of 'I-ness' that, according to the Buddha, is the cause of suffering in this world. "I do not see, O monks, that form of clinging to 'I-ness' which having clung to, there would not arise sorrow, lamentation, suffering, agony and despair".<sup>25</sup> Clinging leads to suffering because it is the attachment to self-interest, to desires, which stops the flow of life. As Inada discerningly remarks, "passions and desires (*īṣṇā*) are vital parts of our experiences but they need not be restrained by the clinging phenomenon (*upādāna*), i.e. they can go on in a purely detached manner without the clinging elements of being".<sup>26</sup> It is not that desires are bad in themselves but that we become attached to them and thus interrupt the ongoing process of becoming. Inada elaborates on the incongruence of (*īṣṇā*) as becoming and *upādāna* as being :

On the one hand, *īṣṇā* is a force, an activity that lunges forward in the experiential process and on the other *upādāna* (attachment) is a holding, steadying pattern that keeps the process from lunging forward in the sense of incorporating new elements... The latter is always ancillary to the former and in its expended nature counters the flow of the basic flow. While the former thrives on process, the latter thrives on static objectification... While the former is a moving ontology, the latter is a static type of ontology...



One of the most basic origins of the suffering state is the inability of man to cope with the flow of existence or the plain fact that life and its elements are momentary or transitory.<sup>21</sup>

Thus it is clinging, not the desires themselves, that, as cause and consequence of the static self, of the conceit of 'I-ness', leads to suffering. Life is a process, a flux, momentary. But it is not a series of discrete ontological or mental particulars as with Locke. Rather it is a continuum or stream of reality/becoming (*bhava*) and a continuum or stream of consciousness (*bhavāṅga*). As a process, experience is without any static substratum, either ontologically or consciously. The attempt to read this process ontology in terms of substantial-as-static-being is to err as egregiously as if one were to insist on imposing direction on the extinguished fire. Indeed, to view life from the perspective of static 'I-ness' entails clinging and hence suffering.

Nevertheless, while momentariness would seem to militate against a static conception of the self, it does not reduce to a denial of the self. The momentary self is ontologically and phenomenologically real. It is not, however, a simple sense particular. Hume's problem of identity is the outgrowth of his metaphysics; it is part of the myth propagated by substantialism. To be sure, identity in the strict Humean sense is fictitious: "Time... implies succession, and when we apply its idea to any unchangeable object, 'tis only by a fiction of the imagination, by which the unchangeable object is suppos'd to participate of the changes of co-existent objects".<sup>22</sup> But the problem of identity only arises if one presupposes a metaphysics of permanence, a static ontology of being; the fiction, in other words, is the "unchangeable object", the eternal self. But to give up the identity of static, permanent selves does not entail that the self is feigned. "Unchanging", "identical", "permanent" equate with real for the



substantialists and essentialists, not the advocates of a process philosophy. The self is phenomenologically real; it is just not permanent. The theory of momentariness and process philosophy does not preclude continuity, merely identity. In that sense it does not vitiate moral responsibility; the murderer is still tried. After all, the Buddha does maintain the theory of *karma* in which one 'sows that which he reaps', be it for better or worse. But to fully appreciate the continuity of the self and the Buddhist conception of ethical responsibility as entailed by *karma*, one must understand the doctrine of conditioned origination.

*Conditioned Origination : The Self as Person-in-Context*

As noted above, Hume, in contrast to the Buddha, was troubled by his insights into the phenomenal nature of the self. He felt that if there were no permanent identity to the self, then moral responsibility would be effaced. Having adopted the atomistic view of experience as consisting in discrete, static elements, when his analysis of identity revealed to him that the relations holding the pieces together were the fictitious attributions of the mind, the world, for Hume, simply fell apart. It disintegrated into a flux of discrete particulars which disallowed the continuity necessary for an ethically responsible self.

The Buddha, on the other hand, did not share Hume's atomistic metaphysics. He did not reduce the flux of experience to independent, discrete ontological elements (*dharma*s). He saw experience, not in terms of static being, but as a process of becoming in which one moment is conditioned by the preceding one and in turn conditions the next. Experience is a flow. Continuity is implicit. It is not something "added" by the mind; experience is relational.<sup>29</sup> Again, discontinuity is one of the peculiar idiosyncracies of misguided metaphysicians who, wanting to hold on to a permanent self, separate the subject from the object, who break up the flow into discrete elements, and there-



*Buddhist Process Ethics*

by give the lie to continuity. They, because of their metaphysical assumptions of fixed substances, discrete ontological units and so on, impose discontinuity onto experience. It is a reflection of the degree to which this type of metaphysics has conditioned thinking that, in spite of one's own everyday experience which is surely felt to be—and lived as if it were—continuous, one must still argue for continuity in experience rather than discontinuity. The kind of ethical difficulties over moral responsibility which the theory of momentariness has been accused of generating can only exist in the minds of errant metaphysicians. Only they could be worried about stringent identity requirements of Hume because they alone, by construing the flow of experience in terms of discontinuous, discrete, ontological particulars, sabotage continuity and thereby undermine ethical responsibility. The Buddha's theory of *karma*, predicated on the doctrine of conditioned origination which entails continuity between events in the process of becoming, ensures that not only will one be held responsible for his deeds but that he will receive his just deserts—nothing more, nothing less.

However, as noted above, *pratīti'-a-samutpāda* would seem to pose its own challenge to ethical responsibility. If one's actions are conditioned, then his freedom is impinged upon. He is deprived of autonomy; he is, in short, coerced. His actions are determined by external conditions and hence he is absolved from ethical responsibility. One must be an autonomous agent to be ethically culpable.

Again, this kind of problem could only arise for metaphysicians who deny the process nature of the flux of experience and cling to the wayward notion of essentialistic, discrete selves. The culprit is the myth of an autonomous ethical agent. By imposing their assumptions of static reality on the flux, they create a dichotomy between the subject and the object, the individual and



the environment, and thereby give rise to the dualism of autonomy and determinism. If the self is not an indivisible individual radically estranged from the rest of the atomistic beings which constitute the world but rather a relational person-in-context, then the issue becomes one of degrees of freedom and conditionality (and hence of responsibility), not a case of either-or. That is the dualism of autonomy and determinism collapses, becoming a continuum instead.

Indeed, as we have seen, the self, for the Buddha, cannot be taken as an independent, fixed, ontological element. Experience is a continuous process of interdependent *events* in which one event gives rise to another. Unlike the sharp definition of discrete, atomistic ontological element, the boundaries of the phenomenological events are indeterminate. The shape of an event is carved out of the flux from a given perspective; its parameters are defined according to a particular locus of interest. In that sense, an event protracts or contracts as the field of experience, the flux, is brought into focus. Similarly the self, then, is not a discrete entity but an event in process. Its boundaries cannot be defined in a once and for all way, but will depend on the particular perspective, the specific focus. The self is a person-in-context; it is conditioned by, and conditions, the context.

At first glance, then, the problem would seem to be just the opposite of that generated by the theory of momentariness. Instead of there not being enough continuity to provide a self which can be held morally responsible for its acts, there is too much. That is, the self is so interdependent with its context that it cannot be isolated, thereby rendering it impossible to attribute to it autonomy and hence the kind of unilateral responsibility required to assign unmitigated blame or praise. But



this is not as problematic as it appears. One can, if he so chooses, isolate the self in the same way that one can bring the field into sharper focus to highlight a particular aspect. The judge is able to try the murderer as a moral agent by focusing on him within the flux of the total environment—by bringing his actions out in relief against the surrounding background—just as the listener can focus, for example, on a certain musical phrase within a song or even a note within the phrase.<sup>30</sup>

The real difficulty, however, arises in determining the extent of responsibility of the person vis a vis the other environmental conditioning factors which gave rise to the event for which the person is being held responsible. In that an event originates from a nexus of interdependent conditions, ethical responsibility would seem to be diffused over the continuum. No single person could be held totally responsible for an event; the murder would be a communal act. Indeed, this has been the line of reasoning taken by the American pragmatists Dewey and James as well as by the Chinese philosopher Confucius, all of whom share with the Buddha the view of experience as a process, a flux, in which the person is both conditioned by, and a conditioner of, his environment. That the community shares the responsibility for, Confucius is attested to by his concern with shame rather than guilt. As Roger Ames observes, "guilt tends to be individual as a condition of one's relationship to law; shame tends to be communal as a condition of one's relationship to others."<sup>31</sup> The most incontrovertible verification that responsibility was indeed taken to be shared by the Chinese lies in the historical fact that, in murder cases, not only would the murderer be executed but so would his family and relatives. While James and Dewey would surely not have taken the implications of the diffusion of responsibility to such draconian extremes, they do

...2



eloquently articulate the social dimensions of the self in their writings. They see the individual not as a disinterested observer but the product of social forces which condition the way one responds to his environment. Dewey, in particular, is acutely aware of the power which the social, political and economic institutions bring to bear on the individual. His call for the application of "Intelligence" to the social problems created by these institutions is an attempt to force society to face up to its collective responsibilities.

Curiously, the Buddha does not seem to be as engrossed with the social dimensions of the self as are the others. His eight-fold path concentrates on ethical concerns within the grasp of the individual—right speech, thought, resolve, concentration and so forth. One can only speculate as to his reasons for this. Perhaps he felt that ultimately the decision and hence the responsibility lies with oneself regardless of the other conditions. One can, as he himself did, resist the pressures and lead an ethical life. Perhaps he felt that if one could just carry out the eight-fold path which was within each person's reach, this would be enough. After all, the person is a constituent of society. So when the person changes, so does society. Perhaps he felt that we do not need social changes which come from the top down or that they simply cannot work. That is, the ethical life cannot be imposed from outside but must begin from within. Ultimately, a person must realize the way for himself; the ethical life arises from personal experience, not social legislation. Interestingly, this difference between Buddha and James, Dewey and Confucius, parallels to some measure the distinction between the Hinayāna and the Mahāyāna schools. While the former is more interested in individual salvation, the latter is primarily concerned with universal salvation.



The result of Buddha's meditations was a Copernican turn from the *Upaniṣad* philosophy of substances to a process philosophy of events, from experience as static being to experience as a flux of becoming. This upending of the traditional perspective brought with it a radical change in the conception of ethics. Unfortunately, the stubborn persistence of a metaphysics of substance and essences threatens to undermine the ethical insights of the Buddha by imposing the wrong categories on the central doctrines of *anattā*, momentariness and conditioned origination. Viewed from the perspective of a metaphysical tradition which presupposes an ontology of static being and discrete sense datum, the teachings of the Buddha would seem to sound the death knell of ethics. *Anattā*, taken literally rather than as an injunction against the fictitious attribution of permanency to the self, would ensure the demise of ethics by denying the existence of the ethical agent. But when the theory of *anattā* is read in light of the doctrines of momentariness and conditioned origination, it becomes clear that the self that is being repudiated is the illusory permanent self of *Upaniṣad* metaphysics, not the phenomenological self-as-becoming. Similarly, momentariness would appear to spell the end for ethical responsibility by denying that the self which murders is the identical self which is being tried for murder. But again, when understood in conjunction with *pratītya-samutpāda*, it becomes clear that it is not that the continuity of the self is being denied; it is just that the self is not identical in the sense presupposed by a philosophy of static being. Finally, the doctrine of conditioned origination is taken to task for being deterministic. As such it deprives the individual of the autonomy required for voluntary acts and hence vitiates ethical responsibility. But again, this dualism of autonomy and determinism is operable only from the standpoint of a philosophy which bifurcates the subject and the object, the individual and the world. Such sharply drawn distinctions, however, have



ontological validity only in a system which assumes discrete, static particulars. For the Buddha, the world is a flux and the self a person-in-context. One not only is conditioned by, but conditions, one's environment. Thus, though the Buddha himself did not elaborate at length on this aspect, there is a social dimension to the self. Ethical responsibility becomes not only an individual concern but one for the whole society.

Department of Philosophy

R. P. PEERENBOOM

University of Hawaii at Manoa

2530 Dole Street

HONOLULU, HAWAII-96822-2383

#### NOTES

1. D. C. Mathur, "The Historical Buddha (Gotama), Hume and James on the Self : Comparisons and Evaluations," *Philosophy East and West* 28, no. 3, (1978) : 254. See also *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* (ed) Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 272; Chandradhar Sharma, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy* (Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 1976) p. 71.
2. Bernard Williams explores the disarray within the field of ethics in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1985). In the process of considering and rejecting moral theory since Socrates, he questions the role of philosophy for ethics, arguing that philosophical reflection "might destroy knowledge", p. 167.
3. The most notable exception is of course the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. However, I will also have occasion to refer to the pragmatism of William James and John Dewey both of whom rejected the substantialist and essentialist biases in favour of an analysis of experience in terms of a flux.
4. Confer David Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*, (Albany : State University of New York Press), pp. 12-17. They define transcendence as follows : "A principle, A, is transcendent with respect to that, B, which is served as principle if the meaning or import of B



cannot be fully analyzed and explained without recourse to *A*, but the reverse is not true."

5. See for example, Alan Gewirth, "Categorical Consistency in Ethics," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 69, (1967); Thomas Nagel, *The View From Nowhere*. (New York : Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 110-126.
6. Sharma, p. 80.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
8. Henry Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, (New York : Atheneum 1982), pp. 129-130.
9. While the scope of this paper prevents me from treating this point at length, I would like to briefly suggest that one would expect, given the nature of the Buddha's process philosophy, that there would indeed not be any universal, eternal moral laws or principles. While Dharma may refer to the way of the world in the most fundamental sense, it should not be rendered as Moral Law. Rather, the doctrine of conditioned origination would seem to imply a pluralistic ethics in which what is appropriate is so for a given time and place and is conditioned by the particulars which define the environment. I will touch tangentially on this issue below.
10. Kenneth Inada, "Problematics of the Buddhist nature of self," *Philosophy East and West* 29, no. 2 (1979), p. 146; see also Inada, "Munitz' Concept of the World...A Buddhist Response" and "Rejoinder to Munitz," *Philosophy East and West* 25, no. 3 (1975), pp. 309, 351-352.
11. S. IV, 400. Tr. Sharma, p. 78.
12. S. III, 144. Tr. by K. N. Upadhyaya, "The Buddhist Doctrine of *Anattā*," *Philosophical Quarterly*, p. 123.
13. M. 1. 138. Upadhyaya, p. 121.
14. Inada, p. 144.
15. Upadhyaya, p. 119.
16. E. M. Hare, tr. *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, vol. 3 (London : Luzac and Co., 1937, 1952), pp. 237-238.
17. It is important to note that there is both "self-agency" and "other agency." This will be taken up below when we discuss the notion of the conditioned origination and the manner in which the self is both conditioned by, and conditions, the environment.
18. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1888, 1963), I, p. 251.



19. *Ibid.*, p. 252, emphasis mine.
20. Warren, p. 127.
21. Mathur, p. 259.
22. Hume, pp. 252-253.
23. Mathur, p. 261. He cites Hume, p. 264 : "I am at first affrighted and confounded with that forlorn solitude, in which I am plac'd in my philosophy, and fancy myself some strange uncouth monster who not being able to mingle and unite in society, has been expell'd all human commerce, and left utterly abandon'd and disconsolate...When I look abroad, I foresee on every side, dispute, contradiction, anger, calumny, and detraction. When I turn inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance."
24. Confer Mathur, pp. 262-262; Hume, pp. 253-254, 259, 262.
25. M. I, p. 137, Upadhyaya p. 123.
26. Inada, p. 153.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
28. Hume. I, iv, 6, p. 200,
29. In this sense the philosophy of the Buddha is much more akin to that of the American pragmatists. William James, for instance, states : "The generalized conclusion is that...the parts of experience hold together from next to next by relations that are themselves parts of experience. The directly apprehended universe needs, in short, no extraneous trans-empirical connective support, but possesses in its own right a concatenated or continuous structure...The statement of fact is that the relations between things...are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves' (*Meaning of Truth*, Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1975, xii-xiii ).
30. The note is the smallest unit available in our language for breaking down the flow of music. but it need not be. Just as physicists continually create new jargon to describe the increasingly smaller distinctions which they need to carry out their work, so could musicians further subdivide the flow of music if there were the need to do so.
31. Hall and Ames, p. 174. I would also like to acknowledge Hall and Ames for having developed the field-focus model as applied to the process philosophy of Confucius as well as K. N. Upadhyaya and Peter Herschok for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper.



*Indian Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. XVI, No. 3.  
July 1989

## MORAL SCEPTICISM

The problem and issues raised by moral scepticism are indeed more complex than those of epistemological scepticism though there are a number of assumptions and approaches which are common to both. That it must be the case need not surprise any of us because any sceptical theory is grounded in certain mistrusts and doubts and consequent denial or non-acceptance of objectivity in its respective domain. Scepticism as a method in general denies any logical connection between truth of any belief and how we arrive at it. In the context of morality scepticism often results from a frustrating belief concerning irresolvable differences regarding values, norms and obligations which are deemed to have no relation with questions of logic and facts. Whereas in majority of the cases epistemological scepticism leads to moral scepticism (Hume, in my view, is of course an exception), a moral sceptic may with ease refuse to commit himself to the former. In other words, one may doubt objective moral truths without in the least doubting the possibility of our knowledge of the external world in particular and that of empirical knowledge in general. Scepticism in ethics arises out of a realization of the futility of any attempt to justify moral judgements or arguments.

Though moral scepticism, in the final analysis, may generally arrive at some particular and definite conclusions, various grounds and reasons individually or severally are found to have supported its emergence. In what follows I may venture to state

Received : 10-5-88



some familiar bases of moral scepticism without of course claiming their exclusive nature. Some of these grounds may only indirectly suggest that moral scepticism is the only proper approach as far as the notions of 'right', 'duty', 'good' etc., are concerned. Besides, it may also be found that some of these either reinforce one another or they mutually overlap in counter-acting the alleged claims of moral knowledge and moral objectivity. Therefore, after having stated some of the possible grounds of moral scepticism, I will briefly discuss them without every time neatly indicating the relevance or applicability of a specific point to any particular ground. In the development of moral scepticism it may be seen that suspicion against both reason and the senses has encouraged one on the path of scepticism.

a) Of the possible grounds of moral scepticism moral relativism stands out as one of the most congenial attitudes. Moral relativism may be given two interpretations. One may be described as the *general theory of moral relativity* and the other, the *specific theory of moral relativity*. By the former I mean the view that moral values and obligations are relative to general human situations, needs and desires. These in turn may be seen in the context of various cultural, historical and economic conditions. The moral space within which values, rights and obligations find their legitimate expression includes both physical (i.e., geographical) and temporal (i.e., historical) spaces. Understanding and appreciation of different societies and their cultures have always been found to be significant in the correct appraisal and appraisal of moral ideals. By the specific theory of moral relativity, I mean the standpoint that moral values are dependent on the individual's unique and specific situation and any agreement and community of approaches concerning values and obligations are incidental, never necessary—nor even common. This may be briefly expressed as a vulgarised version of Pro-



*Moral Scepticism*

tagoras' well known dictum : ' (Individual) man is the measure of all things '.

b) The second fertile ground for moral scepticism has been subjectivism of one form or the other. This school of thought has been so much discussed and debated that each and every possible argument and counter-argument, for or against it, is known to every student of ethics. From the days of Hume to those of Ayer, Stevenson or Edwards a number of variations have been brought about on the theme of subjectivism. What is common to all forms of subjectivism is the relation between ethical predicates and our feelings, emotions and sentiments. The two major forms of subjectivism, known as old and new subjectivism, differ on the point of its acceptance or rejection of the view whether this relation can or cannot be expressed in a propositional form. In other words, the bone of contention between the two is whether the subjective nature of ethical terms can be objectively asserted. Another variation has been in terms of what is sometimes called social subjectivism and individual subjectivism. It is mainly the latter forms of the two above-stated variations, viz., non-propositional form of ethical judgements and individual subjectivism, which may be considered to have been quite conducive to moral scepticism. If this is so, one of the greatest advocates of scepticism, Hume, would be counted out of the list of the votaries of moral scepticism. I will, however, say something more regarding Hume's position a little later.

c) A third factor which seem to be a favourable point in support of scepticism is the view that there is no possibility of a reasoned or rational decision in morals. This is generally taken to be a corollary of subjectivism whereby 'good' or 'right' refers to any situation or action one likes. And this is precisely what 'good' or 'right' means. If moral judgement are assigned



infallibility or incorrigibility, they obviously move out of the domain of rational arguments or rational decisions.

d) Finally, I will refer to one more point which is also considered to be congenial to moral scepticism. It has often been admitted that the question 'Why something is the ultimate end or value?' or 'What is the proof of the highest value?' or 'Why one ought to do one's duty?' or any other formulation of such a question is unanswerable. There is a list of important thinkers arrayed behind such a move. Aristotle, Kant, Mill, Moore or Hare are but some of them who have in one sense or the other adopted such a stance. But this can be given an illegitimate extension by suggesting that the above question is only in disguise the same as the question, 'Is anything right at all?' And if the former set of questions is unanswerable, the latter is also unanswerable. But the assertion concerning there being unanswerable can be made out to be only a rhetorical way of saying that the answer is 'No'. Hence moral scepticism.

Now let us briefly discuss the above mentioned views and positions in order to see whether they are tenable and whether moral scepticism necessarily follows from them.

a) Talking of moral relativism in general, it would be of some interest to see how did relativism assume the position of having bred moral scepticism. The road to scepticism from relativism however often passes through the labyrinth of subjectivism. The standpoint of relativism apparently owes its origin to the reaction against, and the consequent denial of, the moral absolutes. That there are moral truths which are absolute was embedded in an extreme form of rationalism which would grant rationality to morals primarily on the condition that there are *a priori* moral truths. Besides, objectivity of moral judgements was supposed to hang on the peg of moral absolutes. Thus, moral relativity came to mean not only the negation of absolute moral values



*Moral Scepticism*

but also the denial of moral objectivity. Though mistakenly, often the streams of moral relativism and subjectivism are deemed to flow on the same bed. Religion and theology have also taken sides with the admission of absolute truths in ethics. Divine commands for divine goodness could easily guarantee eternal and absolute values and virtues which could survive the vicissitudes of time and could stand solidly as the sheet anchor of human perfection and morality. Any theory which militates against moral absolutism, both in terms of absolute values/commands and absolute knowledge, could easily fall in disrepute in the heyday of rationalism and was probably charged with sceptical ideas. In other words, relativism came to be treated as an ally, if not the progenitor, of scepticism. It has also often been argued that relativisation of moral truths tantamounts to the denial of moral justification and reasoning and, thus, to the denial of moral knowledge. But it does not require any aggressive argumentation to show that such a conclusion is *non sequitur*. As has been referred to above, if such an approach has any applicability, it is only in respect of what I have called the specific theory of moral relativity, not of the general one. Laws, norms or conventions are not always absolute, though general and universal. They are relative to human nature and situations and yet objectively appropriate and relevant or inappropriate and irrelevant in relation to an age or a society. If the term 'man' in 'man is the measure of all things' is understood in the sense of 'species man' or human beings at large, it does not commit any one to the form of relativism which is conducive to scepticism. It was not only Protagoras who was convinced of his own dictum. Men like Aristotle, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Hume have also upheld the cause of Protagoras in a slightly different vein. For Aristotle, the good man is the measure of what is pleasant and agreeable or painful and disagreeable. For Hume too, the educated man is the measure of



feelings and sentiments on which morality is founded. The role of a benevolent impartial spectator in Hume, as in the Moral Sense School, is to present to our consideration an objective appraisal of what is good or bad, right or wrong. In words of H. D. Aiken,

...our expressions of moral praise or blame are expressions of what such a spectator *would* approve or disapprove rather than what we ourselves actually do feel.<sup>1</sup>

The convention of the impartial spectator is accepted by Hume as a way of "correcting our sentiments". The concept of such an observer or spectator is surely not a far cry from Protagoras' 'man'. Of course, it may be said that such an observer is an idealized version of man on whom objective concepts of values are already grafted. But if we remember the conditions and possibility of grafting, the notion of 'ideal observer' can be easily seen to be situated in a socio-cultural context. What it does not show is that moral truths cannot be admitted to be so unless they are eternal and absolute. Of course, if moral truths or values are made out to be specifically function of each individual's conditions and situations without any common criteria and norms, denial of moral knowledge may seem to be inevitable. But such a relativism is as much a philosophical myth as moral absolutism. Even if moral scepticism, born of the specific theory of moral relativity, is held as a theoretical possibility, it can never be maintained at practical level. The form of theoretically viable moral scepticism would ultimately lapse into moral solipsism which hardly any philosopher worth the name has ever maintained. If morality represents a way of life of a people or a society, its being conditioned by the environment and nurture does not take away the objective grounds of moral judgements.

b) Now let us turn to the second important ally of moral scepticism, i.e. subjectivism. In one sense, within the domain of



*Moral Scepticism*

new subjectivism or emotivism the discussion of moral scepticism may be declared quite irrelevant because the non-cognitivist approach to moral judgements puts the point of moral knowledge out of courts. The debate concerning the viability or otherwise of moral scepticism becomes philosophically uninteresting because the nature of moral concepts and judgements is such that they are bound to be subjective expressions and since knowledge is always objective, there is no question of there being any moral knowledge at all. So moral scepticism is an undeniable fact, an incorrigible philosophical position which rules out by definition a counter-position. But let us beware of a trap here. Granting that moral judgements and concepts undeniably refer to feelings, emotions and other psychological phenomena, it does not necessarily follow that there cannot be any objective discourse about morals. Barring those who deny that there are any moral judgements at all, many subjectivists may very well admit that a judgement about subjective phenomena can be objective. A judgement need not be subjective (in the sense required here) simply because it refers to some experience. Subjectivism has indeed a point in asserting a causally necessary connection between our judging something as good, bad, right or wrong and our having certain feelings towards or against it. A Hume's authority on this point may be suspect but a Butler, a Rashdall or a Moore would surely attract attention. Rashdall admits that "the content of our moral judgement is dependent upon the sensitive and emotional as well as the rational nature of man."<sup>2</sup> Butler is quite well known for his view that conscience partakes of the nature of both the 'sentiment of understanding' and a 'perception of the heart'. Moore, since the publication of *Ethics* (1912) shifted towards the view that "nothing can be an intrinsic good unless it contains both some feeling and some other form of consciousness."<sup>3</sup> By the time he writes 'A Reply to my Critics' (1942) he is almost half conve-



rted to emotivism. Recently, Bernard Williams in his 1965 Inaugural lecture at Bedford college entitled 'Morality and the Emotions' <sup>4</sup> has shown the significance of emotions in morality by indicating how emotions do not just happen to us but are states expressed in action as well as how emotions can function as motives. Against the backdrop of thinkers who are objectivists or ideal utilitarians, Hume's statement sounds a moderate note when he says that "reason and sentiment concur in almost all moral determinations and conclusions" (*Enquiry*, sec. 137) Against "disingenuous disputants" (moral sceptics?) Hume in his *Enquiry* uses vast battery of arguments to assert "the reality of moral distinctions" (Sec. 133), The partial truth of subjectivism is too obvious to be denied. Nor is it necessary! Relation between rightness and feelings and emotions may be accepted as a causal one without any inconsistency. Emotivism goes wide off the mark when it makes this relation logical i.e., true by definition and also insists on its exclusiveness. If the notion of 'truth' at least on some accounts, can be shown to be intimately connected with that of 'belief' and it is deemed to be demanded by the principle of consistency, the same treatment with equal consistency may safely be extended to the notions of 'right'/'good' and those of 'desire' and 'feeling'. If, 'I know that p' or 'p is true' demands 'I believe that p' as a practical/psychological correlate by way of assenting to p, 'p is good/right' may equally and in the same manner demand 'I like/approve of p'. Nowell-Smith's 'contextual implication' and 'logical oddness' are not merely his personal idiosyncrasy. Similarly, the contrast between theoretical and practical reasoning need not be a fertile ground for moral scepticism. Nevertheless, to the extent that subjectivism or emotivism refuses to accept the above mentioned implications, and denies any possibility of interpersonal objectivity or the intersubjective context of moral judgements, it does facilitate the rise of moral scepticism. In later Wittgenstein and



*Moral Scepticism*

the post emotivist writers like Toulmin, Hare and Nowell-Smith, there are clear indications of the intersubjective truths and acceptability of moral judgements without necessarily taking sides with full-blooded objectivism or subjectivism.

c) The denial of the possibility of rational arguments and that of giving reasons in support of decisions in ethics has generally been favoured by every moral sceptic. This is one of the most widely discussed problem during last four decades though it has been the subject of ethical reflection since Socratic times and found its first proper systematic treatment in Aristotle. Aristotle in fact anticipated Hume when he said that the unqualified (pure ?) understanding by itself moves nothing but as practical understanding, i.e., when it is purposive and aims at an end, it can cause movement (NE, 1139a and 1146a). Moreover, in his analysis of choice which originates action, he talks of the unity of understanding and desire (Hume's 'reason and sentiment'). He talks of the 'desiderative reason' and 'ratiocinative desire' to explain deliberate action which is concerned with the choice of right means for the given ends. Hume's language in the *Treatise* is more blunt and aggressive when he says that "reason is and ought to be the slave of passions". But for those who are acquainted with the polemical background of his *magnum opus* it should not sound outrageous. In the *Enquiry* the same idea is expressed with moderation when he observes that "an active principle can never be founded on an inactive principle". For Hume ethical terms and judgements can be adequately analysed if it involves reference to the springs of human action i.e., passions. Conduct is concerned with ends and ends are grounded in human desires and feelings. Hence, it is not possible to give an explanation of moral decisions without relating them to human nature and the springs of action. But at the same time



proper place for the variations and differences in human situation and conditions have to be recognised.

The problem of giving reasons for ethical conclusions must be viewed within the context of the relation between an ethical concept and the possible circumstances of its application. One of the ways in which the distinction between facts and values has been made is concerning the nature of relation between meaning and criteria of application of descriptive and value terms. For descriptive terms the relation between their meanings and criteria of application is necessary while for value terms it is contingent. Any description of the circumstances of the application of value-terms may be disputed and alternative of rival circumstances may always be proposed. In Hart's language, moral terms are always 'defeasible.' Though reference to good-making characteristics would always constitute a part of reason for calling anything good, the characteristics in question are not logically bound with value or goodness. This, however, need not appear a frustrating situation as far as ethical reasoning is concerned and can never be a solace to a moral sceptic. A moral sceptic may try to make out a false case for the inferiority of moral reasoning to paradigms of rationality on the strength of the difference between moral values and facts and logic. But it is based on a serious misunderstanding of the nature of moral reasoning. Anyone who is looking for a neat and simple answer to the vexed question of the nature of moral reasoning in terms of deductive or inductive models is in for disappointment which harbours sceptical approach. Nevertheless, deductive and inductive models of reasoning are available to ethics but at the same time certain unproved and unprovable assumptions are accepted as self evident principles. It was in this context that Mill spoke of reasoning from particular to particular. If "questions of ultimate end are not amenable to direct proof," only indirect evidences,



*Moral Scepticism*

confirmations and other analogues of reasoning are employed which have been variously characterised as 'exciting reasons,' 'justifying reasons', 'criterial reasons' and the like. All this falls in a pattern within the frame of human goals, purposes, desires and aspirations. Of all the various possible reasons for an action, context would determine which of them would suffice to justify a given act. But the question is too complex to be answered in terms of a uni-faced mode of reasoning.

C. S. Peirce once remarked that "logic is the ethics of the intellect". Renford Bambrough, by transposing the terms in Peirce's comment says, "ethics is the logic of the will and emotions".<sup>5</sup> Morality requires the ordering and harmonization of our will and emotions in the sense that there must be some regulative and critical principles to make our hopes, aspirations, desires and emotions reasonable and intersubjectively or even universally desirable. And this cannot be achieved without making human needs, wants and desires the real actors in the play of reasoning. The self-regulative and self-critical role of one's moral ideas and principles is further linked with the concept of commitment involved in the acceptance of moral rules and norms. But this is not unique to ethics. As indicated above, if 'truth' and 'belief' have some intrinsic relation, commitment as a mental attitude may also be said to be involved in logic.

d) Now a few words about the last point. The ultimate nature of some moral principles surely demands that within the domain of ethics many rules can only be *ethically justified*, i.e., some ethical principles need be advanced in support of various ethical rules. But this circularity, again, is often seen to be present in the validation of logical rules. The latter can only be validated logically. This does not make the rational nature of logical justification suspect. The unprovability of ethical principles



is accepted in different languages by philosophers like Aristotle, Mill, Kant, Moore or Hare. It is not only peculiar to ethics but every epistemological theory may be shown to have presupposed itself in trying to justify its own tenets.

To conclude, apart from theoretical assumptions of moral scepticism which have been debated in the interest of moral objectivity and the possibility of moral knowledge, the practical consequence of moral scepticism may be morally damaging as it might lead to moral anarchy or even moral nihilism and moral solipsism. Such a state of affairs is painfully subversive of any concept of ethics which meaningfully employs notions of accountability, rule-governed behaviour, intersubjective agreement and disagreement or communication, rational decision making etc. without which ethics loses its relevance to problems of human conduct. Unfortunately the rationalists themselves have sometimes contributed to whatever limited appeal moral scepticism has gained. While on the one hand, since the days of Socrates and Plato, moral rationalists spearheaded the attack on moral relativism and scepticism, on the other hand it were mainly the extreme rationalists who, by their insistence on a *a priori* nature of values, gave a fillip to moral scepticism as a reaction against their brand of rationalism. At the same time, as I have tried to show, the subjectivistic stance of some thinkers like Hume is misconstrued or exaggerated beyond reasonable limit. In *Enquiry*, Hume speaks of 'moral truths' which "he learns from reasoning and argument" (p. 278). He even admits that "virtue and vice become known; morals are recognised, general ideas are framed of human conduct". (p. 274) For Hume, moral principles are not irrational or non-rational, simply-consequent upon certain chance existence of our desires, but these are capable of "standing the test of reasoning and inquiry" (p. 279). In the last Appendix of the *Enquiry* he even goes to the extent of



*Moral Scepticism*

observing that "intellectual virtues also have influence on conduct" (p. 313)—a view which even many objectivists would feel shy of admitting. It is also interesting to note that sometimes the intuitionists' position is so formulated that moral intuition appears to be the last resort of the *pretenders* to moral knowledge. \*

Department of Humanities and  
Social Sciences  
IIT, KANPUR-208 016 (U P.)

S. A. SHAIKA

## NOTES

1. Aiken, H. D.; *Hume's Moral and Political Philosophy*, Hafner Publishing Co., 1984, p. xxxiii.
  2. Rashdall, Hastings; *Theory of Good and Evil*, Vol. I, Second edition, Oxford, 1924, p. 161.
  3. Moore, G. E.; *Ethics*, HUL, 1912, p. 153.
  4. Williams, B.; 'Morality and the Emotions' in *Morality and Moral Reasoning*, ed. John Casey, Methuen & Co., 1971.
  6. Bambrough, R.; *Moral Scepticism and Moral Knowledge*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.
- \* A paper read at the All-India Seminar on 'Scepticism' organized by the Department of Philosophy, Viswa-Bharati, Santiniketan, during March 25-27, 1988,



## OUR LATEST PUBLICATION

REGULARITY, NORMATIVITY AND RULES OF  
LANGUAGE AND OTHER ESSAY IN  
PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

pp. 310

**Prof. Rajendra Prasad**

Rs. 100/-

In this volume twenty essays of Prof. Rajendra Prasad, published earlier in different journals in India and abroad, are collected. In these essays philosophical analysis is brought to bear upon such themes as nature of language, relation between language and philosophy or that between modern logic and philosophy. There are essays in the collection which consider such issues as practical relevance of philosophy, the distinction between apriori and empirical propositions etc. In addition, some essays deal with concepts of substance, mind and religious belief, while some other discuss problems connected with objectivity of historical judgements, relation between man and god, role of reason and sentiment in human life. The last four essays in the collection discuss difficulties connected with philosophical synthesis and consider relation between tradition, progress, freedom, reverence and creativity.

The essays would be immensely helpful to both students and teachers of philosophy.

For further details contact :

The Editor ,

Indian Philosophical Quarterly ,

Philosophy Department ,

University of Poona, Pune 411 007.



## IDENTITY AS NECESSITY : NOZICK'S OBJECTION - KRIPKE REPLIES

Robert Nozick<sup>1</sup> attacks the principle of identity  $(a = b) \rightarrow \Box(a = b)$ . In other words he thinks that if  $a$  is identical with  $b$ , it is *not* necessary that it is necessarily so. That is tantamount to saying that it is purely contingent whether  $(a = b)$ . That fact cannot be extended, Nozick thinks, to an identity in all possible worlds without referring to other relevant (or interfering) facts which may have bearing on settling the issue. The upshot of his argument is that

$$P \quad (a = b) \not\rightarrow L(a = b)$$

To establish  $P$  Nozick refers to two principles on which B. Williams<sup>2</sup> has to depend on for his account of personal identity. The principles in short are : (1) 'that identity cannot depend upon whether there is or isn't another thing of a certain sort'; and (2) 'that if there could be another thing so that then there would not be identity, then there is not identity, even if that other thing does not actually exist'. Both of these principles, Nozick claims, are false. Therefore he concludes that identity is contingent and cannot be necessary. For showing the relevance of other facts (on epistemic ground) in determining identity he uses the example of the Vienna Circle. This is not a case of personal identity in the strict sense but identity in general.

The imagined case runs like this : suppose (which was in fact the case) the original Vienna Circle was driven out from Austria

Received : 17-3-87



and Germany by the Nazis. Of the original twenty members only three members found themselves landed in Istanbul to be the only survivors (to their knowledge) of the Circle. These three keep on discussing philosophy in the original line of the Circle, and know that the rest are dead. So they conclude that *they are the Vienna Circle*. A few years later, however, they have found to their dismay that nine other members of the Circle had gotten to America where they continued to meet, discuss philosophy and so on. That group in the U.S.A. therefore is the Vienna Circle in exile; the group in Istanbul is *not* the Vienna Circle but its Istanbul offshoot.

The moral from this case seems to be, at least Nozick thinks so, that the question whether the Istanbul group is Vienna Circle or not cannot be settled without reference to the fact of discovery of the U. S group. Before the discovery, the Istanbul group was the closest continuer, but *after* the discovery it ceases to be the closest continuer, because a closer one is found to exist between it and the original Circle. Therefore the U.S. group is the 'continuing entity' as the Vienna Circle and we cannot say that the 'closest continuer' depends only upon relationship between the two, and not on whether anything else of a certain sort exists. The question whether the Istanbul group is the Vienna Circle or not can only be answered by reference to other group. If there is any closer one that exists then it is not, if not then it is. Nozick argues from this result that identity is not a necessary relation. ( $a=b$ ) does not entail the truth of  $L(a=b)$ . This is in brief the bone of contention of one of the arguments of Nozick to rebut the thesis of identity as necessity, advocated by Kripke.

Kripke has anticipated some such objections against his theory and his main line of argument to reply would be with reference to his theory of direct reference. Kripke has tried to



*Identity as Necessity*

derive an account of identity as a necessary relation from philosophy of language. To do that he introduces the notion of rigid designator. In this connection Frege's puzzle about 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' has been treated in a different way by Kripke. According to the descriptivist view identity statements like 'Hesperus=Phosphorus' are contingent because it is only by empirical discovery that they are found to be referring to the same object, but they might have turned out to be different. 'Venus=Venus', on the other hand, is necessary because no possible empirical discovery can make it false. In other words the proposition ' $V=V$ ' is necessarily true (that is, true in all counter-factual situations) whereas ' $H=P$ ' is contingently true—that is true only in the actual world, but might have been otherwise.

One possible moral to be drawn from this position is that identity statements involving names like 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' are necessary, because proper names like 'H' or 'P', 'Cicero' or 'Tully' are not pure proper names (i.e., only 'tags' used for reference) but 'abbreviated descriptions' as called by Russell. For him demonstrative names like 'that' can only guarantee necessity of identity. All other kinds of identity statements (involving names like 'H' & 'P' or 'Cicero' and 'Tully') are contingent. Other examples of identity statements are 'Heat is the molecular motion' or 'The atomic number of Gold is 79' which are discovered by empirical sciences. Intuitively these statements appear to be contingent.

But Kripke does not think so. He said: 'I think that in both cases, the case of names and the case of the theoretical identifications, the identity statements are necessary and not contingent. That is to say, they are necessary if true.'<sup>3</sup>

What does he exactly mean by 'necessary if true'? The explication of that needs a further explication of his 'rigid' and



'non-rigid designator'. That will hopefully give an answer to our present problem of identity which Nozick has raised. A rigid designator, following Kripke, is that which designates the same object in all possible worlds in which it exists, whereas a not-rigid designator is accidental and it does not do so. 'Benjamin Franklin' is rigid because it designates the same person in all possible worlds in which he exists. But 'the inventor of bifocal' is not. What he means is that in our language once the 'tagging' of a person as 'Benjamin Franklin' is fixed, the use of the word is also fixed; that means it will refer to the same person (or object) in all counter-factual situations.

To make it clear Kripke offers an intuitive test for 'rigid' and 'non-rigid' designator.

'D' is not rigid iff  $M (D \neq D)$

'D' is rigid iff  $L (D = D)$

Applying this test to 'B. Franklin' we can see that

1)  $L (BF = BF)$  and it is false that  $M (BF \neq BF)$

On the other hand

2) (The inventor of bifocal  $\neq$  the inventor of bifocal) since anyone else may have been the inventor of bifocal and it is only accidental that B. Franklin has actually been the one.

But there is still an ambiguity in the reading of (2) because someone may argue that 'the inventor of bifocal' may be used only to refer to the actual inventor and not all possible ones. But no such ambiguity is there in the reading of ' $BF = BF$ ' or ' $V = V$ '. What these statements state is that no matter what other facts are there, the identity stated is necessarily true if it is true (thus excluding false identity statements) in all possible worlds in which the person or the particular planet exists. In



*Identity as Necessity*

short, the kind of identity stated by statements containing rigid designators is necessary.

How would this position respond to Nozick-type situation? If 'Vienna Circle' is a rigid designator, i.e., a proper name given to a body of people on some occasion then its reference is fixed on that 'baptising' ceremony. Kripke would not find any difficulty like Nozick, when confronted with two different groups of people belonging to the original 'circle'. His general line of reply would be that ' $V=V$ ' no matter whether ' $I=V$ ' or ' $U=V$ '. Of course the example of 'Vienna Circle' is an unfortunate one, because it is not clear why the 'U' is the 'closer continuer' and 'I' is not. Only because 'U' has eight members and 'I' has three? Surely this seems to be arbitrary. Moreover, the epistemic consideration Nozick has brought into the discussion is not new; it has already been thought of before by the descriptivists and Quine. Kripke has successfully replied to that. The fact that ' $V=U$ ', or ' $H=P$ ' is discovered or known to be true by experience. But once it is found (by whatever method—by experience or by a priori methods) to be true, it will be true in all possible worlds. In other words the identity is necessary. Nozick may reply that if the 'U' is not discovered, ' $V=I$ ' would have remained true as the closest continuer. Therefore, the knowledge of 'U' is relevant for the truth, and the identity here is not necessary.

Now there is a problem in Kripke's theory of rigid designator and Nozick's woolly example points towards it. Kripke mentions two types of rigid designators :

(1) Singular terms (proper names) and (2) some definite descriptions like mathematical descriptions such as 'the square root of twenty five'.



(2) is much more clear than the (1). Definite descriptions like 'the square root of twenty five' speaks of an essential property by which the transworld identity of a number or an object can be understood. But how can names like B. Franklin (which are unmeaning marks) refer to the same person needs further philosophical argument to account for the acclaimed 'necessity' or identity across possible worlds. In our present context, however, the question is : how do we understand the name 'Vienna Circle' ? I think the best Kripkean move would be to take it as a definite description whose reference is fixed (not arbitrarily) by very clear specification of the essential qualitative marks of it; for example, the common philosophical outlook, each particular member being named, with all the details enumerated so that it can be satisfied by one and *only one* group of people, exactly in the same way as 'square root of twenty five' refers to only one number—no. '5'. In that way the name can refer rigidly—referring to the only group in all possible worlds in which it exists. No matter what group with whatever number of people appears in whatever world. This solution would be more like the extension of rigid designators to natural kinds rather than singular terms. Natural kind like 'cats' refers to whatever satisfies the essential property of being a 'cat'. Similarly ' $V=V$ ' is true in all possible worlds where the original baptismal requirements are met. It does not depend on any empirical discovery as Nozick claims. Nozick's none too clear example of Vienna Circle thus may open up (although unintentionally) a possible further extension of the direct reference theory to other than singular terms and natural kind terms.

But still there remains a problem in Nozick's counterexample which is not fully explained by Kripkean theory. If we regard ' $V$ ' as a rigid designator (either as a singular term or as a natural kind term), which group is identical with it? ' $I$ ' or



*Identity as Necessity*

'U'? The Kripkean theory cannot fully account for it. Does the 'U' stand for the referent or the 'I'? Or neither of them? It is difficult to decide; because although both of them have the other essential properties of 'V', they do not have the original twenty members. Nozick at least has a criterion (however arbitrary), namely 'closest continuer' to justify his claim of saying 'U' = 'V', rather than 'I' = 'V'. But Kripke's present theory (unaided by some other stipulation) cannot solve the problem which one is identical with 'V'. There is a strong intuitive temptation to call both 'I' and 'U' as identical with 'V', but I am not sure whether Kripke would like this consequence.

399 A Jodhpur Park  
CALCUTTA-700 068

MAHASWETA CHAUDHURY

## NOTES

1. Robert Nozick; *Philosophical Explanations*, Chapt. I, pp. 29-114, Harvard University Press, 1981.
2. See, B. Williams, 'Personal Identity and Individuation' and 'Bodily Continuity and Personal Identity', both reprinted in his *Problems of the Self*, O. U. Press, Oxford, 1973.
3. Kripke, Saul; 'Identity and Necessity' *Naming, Necessity and Natural Kinds*, ed. by Stephen P. Schwartz, (Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London : 1977), p. 77.



## THE PHILOSOPHY OF KALIDAS BHATTACHARYYA

Proceedings of a seminar organised by the Department of Philosophy, Rajasthan University, the book contains a critical appraisal of various aspects of the late **Kalidas Bhattacharyya's** philosophical thought, and includes his own final formulation of his philosophical position.

Edited by **Daya Krishna, A. M. Ghose and P. K. Srivastava**

The book includes contributions from **K. L. Sharma** (A Step Beyond K. C. Bhattacharyya), **Daya Krishna** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya and the Logic of Alternation), **S. K. Chattopadhyaya** (Professor Bhattacharyya's "Alternative Standpoints" of Philosophy), **K. Bagchi** (Subjective and Objective Attitudes as Alternatives : A study of Professor Kalidas Bhattacharyya's view of Knowledge-Object Unity), **N. K. Sharma** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya's Philosophy : Alternative Absolutes), **R. S. Bhatnagar** (Philosophy and Meta-Philosophy : Study of a Fundamental Dichotomy in Kalidas Bhattacharyya's Thought), **Mrs. Yogesh Gupta** (Pre-suppositions of Science and Philosophy : A Critical Study), **Mrinal Kanti Bhadra** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya's View of Freedom and Existentialist Thought), **Rajendra Prasad** (Freedom and Existential Thought), **Rajendra Prasad Pandey** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya on the Indian Concept of Man), **K. J. Shah** (Religion—Sophisticated and Unsophisticated), **J. N. Mohanty** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya as a Metaphysician).

1/8 Demy, Pages 239. Price Rs. 60/-

**Contact :** The Editor,

Indian Philosophical Quarterly,

Department of Philosophy,

Poona University, PUNE 411 007.



*Indian Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. XVI, No. 3.  
July 1989

## THE DHAMMA AND THE NOTION OF 'PERCEPTION' : A CONCEPTUAL TECHNIQUE MADE EXPLICIT

### *Introduction*

The aim of this paper is to elicit the nature of the notion of 'perception' in the Buddha's Dhamma. Philosophically speaking, in a discussion of this kind, one cannot ignore the same notion current in Western epistemologies, with special reference to those in recent philosophies in the English-speaking world. It shall be shown, at the end, that the Buddhist notion of 'perception' is not epistemological and therefore Buddhist philosophers who concentrated heavily on an 'epistemology', err.

### *Current Philosophical Deliberations*

It is supposed in the current Western epistemologies that human perception, the exercise of human senses has a stratified character—that it has foundations. It is the concern of the philosopher to make explicit (to lay bare) what these foundations are on the one hand and on the other to show how, and how much of what passes for knowledge was or could be securely supported upon them. 'Perception', accordingly, being consequential, problems relating to it are weighty also. But, then, what are the problems that arise about perception? They are as follows :

- i) The nature of those entities of which in perceiving, we are directly, immediately aware;

Received: 22-9-87



- ii) The interpretation or construction by way of which we pass from awareness of such entities to our complex perception of and judgements about the things in our physical environment which we perceive.

It was argued in recent epistemological discussions on these matters, especially in the English-speaking world (England, America, Canada, Australia and so on) that the problems were *not* ontological but linguistic. That is, it is not a question of two kinds of thing, namely, sensedata and material things—but of two different kinds of language, i.e., sense-datum language and material-object language. The conceptual techniques of such philosophers as Wittgenstein and Austin have contributed a great deal to this change in the nature of perception-talk (debate on perception). The aim in this paper is to note the nature of the problem to overcome the apparently irresolvable dilemmas which beset the philosopher. Wittgenstein once noted : that philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.<sup>1</sup> Bewitchment causes confusion and so, if the problems of perception, as traditionally conceived (noted above) are problems of philosophy, then they have the form : “I do not know my way about”.<sup>2</sup> That philosophy helps one to find one’s way, to survey the territory, not to provide with new or more information, but adds clarity by a careful description of language. The later-Wittgenstein’s contribution, unfortunately, appears ignored by the thinkers who deal with perception : “...while it altered the ostensible aim, appeared not greatly to change the form of the traditional and familiar issues. These appeared to survive, more fashionably dressed”.<sup>3</sup> Such authors as R. J. Hirst, Don Locke, D. M. Armstrong, etc., are important here. Not only are these philosophers and epistemologists concerned with the nature of those entities of which in perceiving, one is directly immediately aware, but also in some



*The Dhamma and the Notion of 'Perception'*

293

kind of construction by way of which one passes from such entities to complex perceptual knowledge. One significant implication is an epistemology-orientation of the notion of 'perception'.

*The Notion of 'Perception' in the Dhamma*

Now with this epistemological base of the notion of 'perception' and the linguistic approach in our mind, we shall attempt to analyse that of 'perception' in the Buddha's Dhamma. The notion of 'perception' ingrained in the Dhamma, though sounds as it is epistemological, it is not so. But, then, what is the nature of 'perception' in the Dhamma? The *suttas* known as the *Mahā-hattinipadopama-sutta* and the *Madhupiṇḍika sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya* stand out as discourses appropriate in this regard. Let us go to the former *sutta* (discourse). It notes 'perception' in this way :

"But when your reverences, the eye that is internal is intact and external material shapes come within its range and there is the appropriate impact, then there is thus an appearance of the appropriate section of consciousness. Whatever is material shape in what has thus come to be, it is included in the group of grasping after material shape. Whatever is feeling in what has thus come to be, it is included in the group of grasping after feeling. Whatever is perception in what has thus come to be, it is included in the group of grasping after perception".<sup>4</sup>

Four necessary and sufficient conditions are noted in this passage regarding visual perception. They are as follows :

- i) that the internal visual sense organ—the eye—is intact;
- ii) that the external physical object coming into the per-

ipient's range of vision;



- iii) sensory impingement, and
- iv) an appropriate act of awareness on the part of the percipient.

When all these conditions are met, the result can be referred to as a successful perception or a successful perception-occurrence. The condition (ii) above can be made explicit to mean "the coming of the external physical object (which exists independently of the perception of the percipient) within the range of his vision.." Without its ontological existence, a perception-occurrence is not possible logically.

Viewed epistemologically, the above assertions, we contend, favour a kind of causal theory of perception, in whatever form they appear, take as their key notions the existence of the physical object, rather in an unpolished sense. All causal theories of perception in whatever form they appear, take as their central notions the existence of the physical object and the effects it produces. These notions, remotely of course, suggest a causal theory of perception. What is emphasized by the statement "the internal visual sense organ (the eye) remaining intact is that the eye which is one of the key sense organs in the human body, plays a role in producing an effect, viz., veridical perception or nonveridical perception. If one accepts the necessity of a sense organ for effecting 'perception' then the theory which such an acceptance would imply is a causal theory of perception, from which, however, it does not follow necessarily that the key aim is epistemological as against other-phenomenological, methodological etc.. The Master's key aim is very different which will be made explicit as we go on.

### *A Causal Theory of Perception*

Let me make a brief record of central notions of a causal theory of perception as understood today. This will help the



reader to grasp the nucleus of the point we wish to establish in this paper.

A comprehensive version of causal theory of perception, in a modern sense, must include both the notions of veridical perception and nonveridical perception (false perception). The roles of the sense organs and of causal ancestry together with the material object (physical object) are necessary and sufficient in respect of veridical perception. In non-veridical perception, however, the role of the physical object is inoperative, while those of the sense organs and causal ancestry remain.

With reference to veridical perception, the argument in the *sutta* can be formulated in this way : Let the percipient be X and the physical object, Y. If it is true that X perceives Y, then, by necessity, the following is the case :

- i) that there is necessary impingement which is an effect;
- ii) that there is an appropriate act of awareness on the part of the percipient, and
- iii) that the elements which are causally responsible, jointly, for this effect are
  - a) the physical object Y and
  - b) the bio-chemical system of X, the percipient.

Sensory impingement, an appropriate act of awareness on the part of the percipient and the physical object are equally significant for 'veridical perception'. Epistemologically, 'sensory impingement', 'awareness', 'physical object' and 'perception', are the key notions that form the conceptual family. If an epistemological justification of 'perception' is called for, then the *Nikāya* literature must provide relevant data to justify the claim, namely, perceiving a physical object Y involves sensory



impingement which is causally accounted for by the existence of the physical object Y on the one hand and X the percipient on the other.

### *The Dhamma and 'Perception'*

In the first instance, the point we made above about the biochemical system of X the percipient may be controversial. But, then, the appropriate discourses are emphatic about the necessity of "the existence of an internal sense organ intact" as a precondition for perception. The significance of the bio-chemical system of man or X, the percipient, therefore, is inevitable. It is this point that introduces new support for our view, namely, that the perceptual reflections in this discourse offer new support for our view, namely, that the perceptual reflections in this discourse make explicit a kind of causal theory of perception in a somewhat primitive sense. The following passage in "the Discourse of the Honey ball" strengthens the above contention: "Visual consciousness arises because of the eye and because of material shapes, and the meeting of the three, that is to say, visual consciousness, the eye and material shapes, in sensory impingement on each other; what one feels one perceives; what one reasons about obsesses one; what obsesses one is the origin of the number of perceptions and obsessions which assail a man in regard to material shapes cognisable by the eye, past, future or present".<sup>5</sup> (The issue is extended to other sense organs as ear, nose, tongue and the cutaneous sense organs of the body.

Such words as (i) eye (or ear or nose or tongue or body)

and

(ii) one

which were noted a little while ago, appear significant to the implied causal theory of perception. Yet, it cannot be entertained that the Buddha was an epistemologist. His exposition of



*The Dhamma and the Notion of 'Perception'*

297

'perception' and 'perceptual assertions' has a very different pointer, basic deviation from epistemology. Very clearly, it is evident from the end note of the Buddha to his perceptual discussions. The notions of "obsessions" and "assailable attitudes" play a central role in this connection. That is to say, though the above discourses draw forth significant perceptual notions, yet it is unphilosophical to evaluate them as pure perceptual or epistemological ones as found in Western epistemologies. In this regard, methodological or paradigmatic reasons stand out as significant. This point is either neglected or refused to be dealt with by the Buddhist epistemologists who mistakenly elevate the perceptual notions at the expense of the ethical notions which are implicitly contained therein. This is barking up the wrong tree. All perceptual utterances of the Master have a key pointer, namely, preparation of a conceptual base towards introducing the ethics-based *Nibbāṇa* message. This end-point is easily demonstrable by noting and eliciting the Buddha's paradigmatic way of ending all his perceptual discourses. As a few illustrations will highlight the point :

- i) After elucidating the conditions of visual perception in the *Mahāhatthipadopama-sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Master ends on the note : "Do you monks, bear in mind this freedom by the destruction of craving taught in brief by me..."<sup>6</sup>
- ii) In the *Samyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha deals with 'visual perception' but there is a significant note of ethical norms when he ends it thus : "I will teach you, monks, how suffering arises and how it passes away".<sup>7</sup>
- iii) The point is further elaborated by the Master when he answered a question raised by the *Śākya* called 'the stick-in-hand' : According to my teaching Sir, in the world with its *devas, māras* and *brahmas*, with its creation



with recluses and *brahmas*, with *devas* and men, there is no contending with any one in the world; for which reason perceptions do not obsess that brahmin as he fares along not fettered to sense pleasures... Herein, these evil unskilled states are stopped without remainder".<sup>8</sup>

- iv) In the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, Mahākaccana points out that the Master's theme herein is to elicit the utmost importance of cessation of unwholesome states and not a presentation of a philosophy of perception. The point is evident from "...cessation of unwholesome states" ("*akusala dhamma aparisesa nirujjhantī ti*," )<sup>9</sup>

#### *Facts to Ethical-norms*

These passages, to a great extent emphasize the conceptual paradigms in the Buddha's *nibbāṇa*-message. Just at this point what is explicitly evident is the methodology of the Buddha. But, then, what is it in plain words? It is a clear passage from the realm of perceptual facts to that of ethical values. Certainly, this expressive characteristic is markedly seen. The perceptual apparatus which the passages note and elicit appear very good both phenomenologically and ontologically. That is, both from the point of view of experience itself and from what actually exists. From the appearance of human person's suffering (which is an empirical fact) to the path leading to the cessation of suffering (which is an ethical value). The perceptual assertions in the *Dhamma* by exclusive reference to such Western categories as "sensory-impingement", "sense-data" in the sense understood in contemporary philosophy in the English-speaking world, with special reference to sense-data philosophies.<sup>10</sup>

But, then, can both *perceptual fact* and *ethical value* be affirmed in one and the same contention? Is not the whole thought process grounded on a jungle of words unclearly put together?



According to Buddha's paradigms, could one move from perceptual fact to ethical value and vice-versa? In the Dhammic discourse both categories—ethical value and perceptual fact—are brought together but *not* unclearly put together. That is to say, a totally different arrangement of perceptual fact and ethical value is the case. It is, however, not an explanation of ethical value by way of perceptual fact. Nor is it the case that ethical value is to be subsumed under perceptual fact. Theories of derivation, or logics of explanation, or ideas of subsumption of value under perceptual fact create ostensible problems or philosophical mistakes<sup>11</sup> to which there are no genuine solutions. Misunderstanding or misjudging of the method ingrained in the *Dhamma* is that which is responsible for the estensible issues in some philosophical deliberations about the *Dhamma*. Admittedly, they are philosophical mistakes. These issues or philosophical mistakes<sup>12</sup> disappear when deception is unmasked. The main source of deception, therefore, is the failure to command a clear view of the method of the Buddha.

The method, however, does not make explicit the acceptance of the logical category of perceptual fact and that of value, and further, how both can be brought together. This is not an issue in the Buddha's *Dhamma*. Nor is it a characteristic of the conceptual tools of the Buddha. Simply, the methodology is the acceptance of possibility of unlimited passage from perceptual fact to ethical value. The Master quoting perceptual facts in respect of human life is granted; but the use of them in the whole doctrinal context as well as strategy could create perplexity. In the whole doctrinal context and strategy, the perceptual facts are brought in,

- i) *not* to note the nature of ethical statements;
- ii) *not* to justify ethical value/statement/norm;
- iii) *not* to derive values from perceptual facts; *but*



- iv) to boost one's morale in the direction of the Buddha's ethical virtues.

The methodology of the Master, *ipso facto*, comprises perceptual facts on the one hand and on the other ethical values to provoke or encourage the aspirant, the follower, to follow the norms of the soteriology—oriented ethical Noble eightfold path. No estensible problems are created.<sup>13</sup>

In Western epistemologies, often the case is that the logical category of perceptual fact is acknowledged as significantly different from that of ethical value. It would appear that no knowledge of ethical value be derived from knowledge of perceptual fact. The argument runs that "what is" is distinctly different from "what ought to be" and that statements about "what ought to be" are neither true nor false empirically. The Western categories make this distinction positive and distinct. Accordingly the point of our argument is not that Western philosophical categories are rather irrelevant or unproductive but that such categories are helpful in noting the nature of the Dhamma's notions, ideas, statements, etc. So Western categories have a vital role to play in understanding the nature of the value-laden statements and fact-laden statements in the Dhamma together with their logical role.

This kind of philosophical reflection (basing on the later-Wittgensteinian techniques) entails six key purposes in the philosophy of Buddhism.<sup>14</sup>

They are as follows :

- i) enlightening us in respect of a basic conceptual technique firmly established in the Buddha's nibbāna-massage;
- ii) not to guess how a word functions;



- iii) not to ignore the use of a word in the language-game which is its normal home;
- iv) to combat against the fascination which forms of expression exert on us;
- v) not to isolate a notion from the native life to which it belongs in which alone it has meaning;
- vi) not to ignore importance of thoughts that are at peace.

Philosophy Department  
 University of Paradeniya  
 PARADENIYA (SRI LANKA)

A. D. P. KALANSURIA

#### NOTES

1. *Philosophical Investigations* (L. Wittgenstein, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1953), p. 470.
2. *Ibid.*, para 123.
3. *The Philosophy of Perception* (O. U. P. ed. G. J. Warnock, Oxford, 1967), p. 2.
4. *The Majjhima Nikāya*. Vol. I (P. T. S. London), pp. 236-7.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 324.
7. *The Saṃyutta Nikāya* Vol. II (P. T. S. London), p. 72.
8. *The Majjhima Nikāya* (opcit), p. 147.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 113. Also see : *The Middle Length Sayings*. Tras. Vol. I (P. T. S. London), p. 147.
10. Kalansuriya, A. D. P., "On Perception" in *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. 4, 1978, pp. 711-24.
11. *Compare : Philosophical Grammar* (L. Wittgenstein, Oxford, 1974), p. 141. "Or I introduce elements into a game where they have no business at all, as for example, 'silent notes' into the playing of the organ. Then again confusion arises and not a genuine problem".



12. See the following books and articles for ostensible problems or philosophical mistakes :
- i) *The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism* (R. E. A. Johansson, Gurzon Press, Oxford, 1979), pp. 144-5.
  - ii) *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* (Cary Zukav, William Morrow, New York, 1979), p. 318.
  - iii) *Philosophy East and West* (Hawaii, 1977, p. 430).  
"The notion of Suffering in Early Buddhism Compared with Some Reflections of Early Wittgenstein", by D. J. Kalupahana.
  - iv) *Caasality : The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (D. J. Kalupahana, Hawaii, 1975), p. 93, p. 98, p. 107.
13. *Philosophical Grammar* (opcit.) p. 9. ("Philosophy must show that there is no problem where there really is none.")
14. Kalansuriya, A. D. P., *A Philosophical Analysis of Buddhist Notions : The Buddha & Wittgenstein*, Indian Book Centre, Delhi, India, 1987. pp. 126-153 and pp. 217-249.



## MODERN ANALYSIS OF SYLLOGISTIC LOGIC : A CRITICAL REFLECTION

The purpose of this paper is to examine modern analysis of syllogistic logic. It is concerned with one of the fundamental doctrines of syllogistic logic, namely, the doctrine of square of opposition. I have tried to show that modern analysis fails in refuting the Aristotelian doctrine. Instead of refuting the doctrine it rather supports the doctrine.

Aristotle, the founder of syllogistic logic, based his doctrine of square of opposition on existential import. He presumed that whenever categorical general propositions are used they do assert the existence of individuals. Aristotle's assumption of existential import ultimately led him to restrict his analysis only to those categorical general propositions whose terms all refer to non-empty classes; furthermore also to classes that have some members, but exclude all other propositions whose terms refer to empty classes, classes that have no members. Here one may ask this question : Why did Aristotle do so ? No doubt, there might have been some good reasons behind his assumption. But one of the reasons which comes to my mind at the moment is this : He must have thought that truth conditions for general propositions would never arise unless their terms refer to non-empty classes. That is to say, he must have thought that genuine predication presupposes the existence of something in the domain of discourse, otherwise the meaning of truth for quantified formulas becomes impossible. Thus it was his notion of truth

Received : 13-6-87



which led him to base his doctrine of square of opposition on existential import. And, if this was the case, I think, he was absolutely right. Nonetheless, whatsoever other reasons there might have been, the fact remains the same, that is, his analysis was restricted only to those propositions whose terms all refer to non-empty classes. And other sorts of propositions for him were not genuine propositions from the semantic point of view. He divided all categorical general propositions into four categories, that is, A, E, I and O. A and E are universal propositions and I and O are particular propositions. Particular propositions are also called existential propositions. These propositions, according to him, stand to one another in certain relationships which Aristotle expresses as follows :

#### *Thesis—1*

A and E are contrary propositions. They might both be false but they cannot both be true.

#### *Thesis—2*

I and O are sub-contrary propositions. They can both be true but they cannot both be false.

#### *Thesis—3*

A and I, E and O are sub-altern propositions. The truth of A implies the truth of I and the truth E implies the truth of O but not *vice versa*.

#### *Thesis—4*

A and O, E and I are contradictory propositions. They can both neither be true nor false. If one of them is true, the other must be false.

For Aristotle, all these theses are valid. They express different types of relationships between two different categorical propositions.



Now, so far modern logicians, like Bertrand Russell and others, are concerned, they hold a different view on the matter. According to them, all relationships except contradiction are invalid. This they say because on their analysis A and E propositions can both be true and I and O propositions can both be false; and as a result of it neither the truth of A implies the truth of I nor the truth of E implies the truth of O. To substantiate their view modern logicians analyse the inner logical structure of categorical general propositions into symbolic language in the following way :

Propositions	Logical Forms or Structures
A	$(x) (\phi x \supset \psi x)$
E	$(x) (\phi x \supset \sim \psi x)$
I	$(\exists x) (\phi x \cdot \psi x)$
O	$(\exists x) (\phi x \sim \psi x)$

The logical structure of A and E clearly reveals two things : (a) A and E propositions are not categorical propositions. They are hypothetical propositions in their logical nature. (b) A and E propositions are quantifications of a complex propositional functions. So is the case with I and O propositions. As a result, whenever general propositions are used they do not assert anything about any individual. They assert the truth values of propositional functions. In fact, as per the modern analysis, individuals do not constitute as parts of the general propositions. General propositions are merely assertions about classes of functions, not of individuals. In this way, according to the



modern analysis, Aristotle's claim that general propositions do have existential import is unfounded. A and E both propositions are true in cases where  $\emptyset x$  has no true substitution instances irrespective of what values are assigned to  $\psi x$ , as they are universal quantifications of a complex propositional functions of the form  $\emptyset x \supset \psi x$  and  $\emptyset x \supset \sim \psi x$  respectively. No doubt, such cases on their view would arise only when expression 'x' in  $\emptyset x$  refers to empty class, a class that has no member in it. It will not hold good in those cases where 'x' in  $\emptyset x$  refers to non-empty class. Since A and E can both be true, therefore, according to the modern logicians, they are not contrary propositions at all. The thesis (1) is, therefore, an invalid thesis. Likewise, I and O both propositions are false in cases where  $\emptyset x$  has no true substitution instances as they are existential quantifications of a complex propositional functions of the form  $\emptyset x . \psi x$  and  $\emptyset x . \sim \psi x$  respectively whose substitution instances are conjunctions with one of the false conjuncts. Since I and O can both be false in cases where  $\phi x$  has no true substitution instances, therefore, according to modern logicians, they are not sub-contrary propositions at all. The thesis (2) is, therefore, an invalid thesis. As the thesis (1) and (2) are invalid so the thesis (3) is also invalid. The truth of universal proposition does not imply the truth of existential proposition. In this way modern logicians prove and substantiate their view that all relationships except contradiction are invalid. This they do by rejecting Aristotle's assumption of existential import.

No doubt, modern analysis is advantageous in the sense that it extends the scope of predicate logic by allowing the subject and the predicate terms of a proposition to refer both to empty and non-empty classes. But, then when we reflect critically on their analysis of propositions from the semantic point of view, we find that their analysis is not well grounded and generates



lots of problems. The reason why I consider modern analysis of propositions to be unsatisfactory from the semantic point of view is that there is a justification for it. Aristotle's conception of relation between two different propositions is embedded in their notions of truth and falsity. This is what I understand from their respective definitions. Had it not been so, Aristotle would not have excluded propositions whose terms refer to empty classes from his logical system of thought. He would have included such kind of propositions in his logical system of thought. But, since, as a matter of fact, he has excluded propositions whose terms refer to empty classes from his logical analysis, this, I think, itself is an evidence to say that Aristotle's doctrine of square of opposition is grounded in the notion of truth and falsity of propositions. This, he thinks, is not possible unless it is admitted that the universe of discourse is non-empty (under which propositions are evaluated in terms of their truth and falsity). If this is so, the analysans and analysandum of modern analysis must depict the same logical property; otherwise, their analysis becomes futile and incorrect. This is the logical requirement of any analysis to be a correct analysis. But unfortunately a critical reflection of their analysis shows that it has failed to fulfil the logical requirement. Instead of refuting Aristotle's doctrine it rather supports his doctrine. How modern analysis has failed in refuting Aristotle's doctrine can be shown in the following way :

Consider for example, the symbolic expressions of  $(x)$   $(\phi x \supset \psi x)$  and  $(x) (\phi x \supset \sim \psi x)$ . These expressions are the logical forms of A and E propositions respectively. They show that A and E propositions are quantifications of complex propositional functions of the form  $\phi x \supset \psi x$  and  $\phi x \supset \sim \psi x$ . Expressions  $\phi x \supset \psi x$  and  $\phi x \supset \sim \psi x$  are expressions of propositional functions because their components  $\phi x$  and  $\psi x$  are propositional functions as they contain individual variable 'x' in



them. Since individual variables are undetermined expressions,  $\phi x \supset \psi x$  and  $\phi x \supset \sim \psi x$  expressions are also undermined expressions. As a result of it, they fall short of the categories of truth values. They cannot be characterized as true or false. Here, it is worth noting that when it is said that propositional functions fall short of the categories of truth values it does not mean that their values also fall short of the categories of truth values. The values of propositional functions can be either true or false since they take singular propositions as their values whose elements are all determined. But this is not equivalent to saying that propositional functions are either true or false. What is true of a proposition is not true of propositional function and *vice versa*. Since propositional functions,  $\phi x \supset \psi x$  and  $\phi x \supset \sim \psi x$  fall short of the categories of truth values and they can neither be true nor false. But A and E propositions also fall short of the categories of truth values. They cannot be characterised as true or false (speaking strictly), as they are quantifications of complex propositional functions. And if A and E propositions cannot be either true or false, then it makes no sense to say that A and E are true in cases where their subject terms refer to empty classes, as modern logicians claim. Consequently, Aristotle's thesis (1) stands unrefuted. The same is true of all other theses. Mere quantification of the variable of a propositional function does not solve the issue. For quantifying the variable of a propositional function is not rendering of that propositional function true or false. Quantification is not the criterion of truth values. In other words, to quantify an individual variable of a propositional function is not to assign truth values to that propositional function. Whenever we quantify any individual variable of any propositional function, what in fact is done is this: We indicate the number of values of individual variable (the values of individual variables are individuals); beyond this nothing is done. In other words, when we quantify any individual



*Modern Analysis of Syllogistic Logic*

variable of any propositional function we make the variable bound, that is, we bring the variable under the scope of quantifier. And to do so is not to change that variable into constant. The essential nature of variable remains in the process unchanged. The only difference between them is that the values of a quantified variable are determined whereas the values of an unquantified variable are undermined. And to do so is neither to assign the truth values to propositional function whose variable are quantified nor to change its variables into constants. Quantification of the values of a variable of a propositional function is one thing and to assign truth values to the propositional function is another. The criterion of the one is not the criterion of the other. Quantification is a mere fixation of the values of a variable of a propositional function, not the truth value assignment to propositional function. If someone thinks so, he is under a wrong impression. Thus, what follows from the above discussions is this : That general propositions, upon the modern analysis, cannot be either true or false. This is true in the light of their logical forms. If general propositions cannot be either true or false, then it follows therefrom that modern logicians have failed in refuting the Aristotelian doctrine of square of opposition, as its theses are embedded in the truth values of A, E, I and O propositions.

It might be argued against my view that when modern logicians say quantified formulas or propositions are true or false they do not mean to say that they are true or false in themselves; rather they are true or false of individuals. If a propositional function of a quantified formula is true of an individual, the individual, on their view, satisfies that function and consequently it makes formula true. Likewise, if a propositional function of quantified formula is not true of an individual, the individual does not satisfy that function and consequently it renders formula



false. In this way modern logicians, instead of assigning the truth values to quantified formulas themselves, judge their validity by interpreting them in terms of their substitution instances in which individual constants are put in for individual variables. For example, modern logicians interpret universally and existentially quantified propositions respectively as conjunction and disjunction of singular propositions. The rationale behind their interpretation of quantifiers as conjunction and disjunction is this: They think there is a similarity of logical behaviour between universal and existential quantifiers on the one hand and the logical constants of dot ' $\cdot$ ' and vel ' $\vee$ ' on the other. As a result of it, they lay down the following criterion of truth for quantifiers: A universal formula, say for example,  $(x) (\phi x \supset \psi x)$  is true iff its substitution instances, for example,  $(\phi a \supset \psi a)$ ,  $(\phi b \supset \psi b)$ ,  $(\phi c \supset \psi c)$ , ...  $(\phi n \supset \psi n)$  are all true; otherwise, the formula is false. Similarly, an existential formula, say  $(\exists x) (\phi x \cdot \psi x)$ , is true iff its at least one substitution instance, for example,  $(\phi a \cdot \psi a) \vee (\phi b \cdot \psi b) \vee \dots (\phi n \cdot \psi n)$ , is true; otherwise, the formula is false. Thus, what follows from the above discussion is this: A, E, I and O propositions are, according to the modern logicians, not true and false in themselves, but they are true and false of individuals; that is, their interpretations are true or false. Therefore, it can very well be maintained that modern analysis refutes Aristotle's doctrine of square of opposition. My humble submission here would be this: Even if we hold that quantified formulas or propositions are not true or false in themselves but that they are true or false of individuals, it does not in any way contradict Aristotle's doctrine. It rather supports his doctrine. Because quantifier's interpretation itself presupposes that the universe of discourse is non-empty. There exists at least some individuals of which quantified formula or proposition is true or false. Besides this, there is another presupposition: Universal quantifier and conjunction, existential



quantifier and disjunction are logically equivalent; otherwise, testing the validity of quantifiers on the basis of the truth values of conjunction and disjunction would logically become impossible. But the presupposition that universal quantifier and conjunction, existential quantifier and disjunction are logically equivalent implies not only that quantifiers and logical constants of dot ' $\cdot$ ' and vel ' $\vee$ ' do have logical similarity ( if not identity ) but also that a quantifier must be either true or false. Because conjunction and disjunction in which quantifiers are interpreted are truth functional in character and presuppose two-valued logic. This means whatever propositions we use in logical operators of dot ' $\cdot$ ' and vel ' $\vee$ ' must have one of the truth values, true or false in complete sense. But to accept this view would amount to reject modern analysis which advocates the thesis that quantified formulas or propositions are not true or false in themselves as they involve propositional functions in them. Besides this, acceptance of presupposition also reduces class-notion to its members; whereas the fact is otherwise. A class is not a member of itself. What is true of a class is not true of its member and what is true of member of a class is not true of that class itself. These consequences are certainly unacceptable to the modern logicians. It cannot be said that quantifier's interpretation does not necessarily presuppose the discourse of the domain of non-empty. Had it been the case, modern logicians would not have advocated the view that quantified formulas are not true or false in themselves on the ground of propositional functions involved in them. They would have set forth the truth conditions for quantified formulas and propositions directly like those for truth functional formulas and propositions without interpreting them in terms of truth functional language, that is, conjunction and disjunction of singular propositions. But they do not do so. This itself is a good evidence to say that they have based their

...5



quantifier's interpretation on the assumption that the domain of discourse (under which quantifiers are evaluated as true or false of individuals) is non-empty. But the acceptance of this view would amount to the acceptance of the validity of Aristotle's doctrine of square of opposition which modern logicians refute. Nonetheless, the whole discussion reflects that modern logicians are not consistent in their logical analysis of A, E, I and O propositions of Aristotelian logic.

What I have said can also be seen to stand valid from another angle : According to the modern logicians universal propositions are conjunction of singular propositions and existential propositions are disjunction of singular propositions. Singular propositions are the simplest kind of propositions out of which their conjunctions and disjunctions are constructed. Neither do they contain any truth functional operators nor any quantifiers. But all this does not mean that singular propositions do not have truth values. Singular propositions do have truth values for the simple reason that their subject terms, being logically proper names, always stand for some individuals of which the predicates of propositions either ascribe or deny certain properties. In other words, a singular proposition always asserts that a certain object specified by its logical subject called proper name satisfies or does not satisfy certain property specified by the predicate of that proposition. If the object referred to does in fact satisfy the description, the singular proposition is true or else it is false. This way of interpreting any singular proposition clearly shows that it is the predicate of proposition that is true or false of what the subject of proposition stands for. In other words, it is the function of predicate that yields true or false proposition, not the other way round. We can get the negation of subject-predicate proposition by simply replacing the predicate term by its own negation, whereas



*Modern Analysis of Syllogistic Logic*

we cannot do this with the subject. But to accept this line of interpretation of a singular proposition would amount to admit that Aristotle's doctrine of square of opposition is valid. This is so because singular proposition's interpretation not only excludes propositions whose terms refer to empty classes from the categorization of truth and falsity but also establishes positively that truth values of their conjunctions and disjunctions in which quantifiers are interpreted, presuppose the universe of discourse being non-empty. There exists at least an object in the universe of discourse referred to by the logical subject of propositions which satisfies or does not satisfy a certain property, specified by the logical predicate of that proposition. And this is exactly what I think Aristotle also had in mind when he based his doctrine on existential import. He thought that the meaning of truth for quantified proposition would never arise unless it is granted that the domain of discourse is non-empty. But to admit this view would amount to admit that general propositions whose subject terms refer to empty classes lack truth values. This, however, the modern logicians deny. Because empty classes contain no individuals of which something can be predicated positively or negatively. Meaningful predication of a certain property to something always presupposes, from the semantic point of view, the existence of that thing in the domain of discourse whose absence always produces truth valuelessness, unless we grant the existence of non-existent entities would mean to admit that the same fact does not make one proposition true and the other false. As a result of this, we would be compelled to discard the rule of negation which states that negation of a true statement is false and negation of a false statement is true. Therefore, given these two alternatives, I think, it is better to admit that absence of an object from the entire domain of discourse produces truth valuelessness instead of admitting the existence of non-existent entities. Here, it is worth noting that



there is a distinction between an object being absent from the entire domain of discourse and an object being absent from a particular part of the domain of discourse. The latter does not produce truth valuelessness, as it implies that the object in question does exist in some other part of the domain of discourse, whereas the former produces truth-valuelessness, as it implies that the object in question exists nowhere in the entire domain of discourse. That is, it is a non-existent entity. If a term is empty it fails to refer, talking from the logical point of view, to anything and if it refers to something genuinely, it ceases to be an empty term. This is primarily because of the fact that emptiness is incompatible with referent. Thus, what makes a proposition true or false is not the presupposition of the existence of an object specified by the subject term of proposition but the actual fact. The criterion of truth is independent of speaker's beliefs and presuppositions. Its source lies in reality.

An objection may be proffered against my view that when modern logicians refute Aristotle's doctrine of square of opposition they refute not on this ground that it is the predicate that always yields true or false proposition but rather on the ground that predicates do not always yield true or false propositions. Because there are propositions, according to them, whose truth values do not require any existential import. Such type of propositions are those whose subject terms refer to empty classes. Consider, for example, quantified formulas  $(x) (\phi x \supset \psi x)$  and  $(x) (\phi x \supset \sim \psi x)$ . These formulas are the formulas of A and E propositions respectively. In this regard, so far Aristotle's view is concerned, these formulas are contrary formulas as their exemplifications might both be false, but they cannot both be true. Aristotle arrived at this conclusion because of his assumption of existential import. But so far as the modern view is concerned, these formulas are not contrary as their exemplifica-



tions are true in cases where the subject expression 'x' in  $\phi x$  happens to be an expression of empty class. Therefore, according to the modern logicians, it is incorrect to say that predicates always yield true or false propositions. They yield, on their view, true or false propositions only in the those cases where they are attached to non-empty subject expressions of propositions. They fail in cases where subject expressions of propositions stand for empty classes; for example, "The unicorns are animals". In the latter cases it is the subject of proposition that makes the proposition false without any existential requirement. Proposition becomes false not because of false predication but because of its subject being empty. Against this my humble submission would be that even if the latter criterion of truth is adopted, it does not refute Aristotle's doctrine of square of opposition on the following grounds :

- i) If emptiness of a class referred to by the subject term of a proposition makes proposition false, irrespective of what is predicated by the predicate term of that proposition, then I think its opposite thesis must hold good equally, that is, non-emptiness of a class referred to by the subject term of a proposition must render that proposition true, irrespective of what is predicated by the predicate term of that proposition. This follows from the dichotomy of truth and falsity. But this is not true as a matter of fact. For example, the subject term of the proposition "Mohan is the son of a barren woman" is a non-empty term and yet the proposition is not true. Modern logicians themselves would not hold the view that non-emptiness of a term renders proposition true. But they are compelled to admit this by their criterion of truth value. This shows that they are not consistent in their analysis and hence their criterion of truth value must be rejected.



ii) Even if it is accepted that emptiness of a class referred to by the subject term of a proposition makes that proposition false it does not invalidate Aristotle's doctrine of square of opposition because Aristotle's criterion of truth value was based on the predicate of a proposition, not the subject of that proposition. The subject-criterion of falsity (the criterion based on the subject of a proposition I call the subject criterion of truth value) is distinct and different from the predicate criterion of falsity (the criterion based on the predicate of a proposition I call the predicate criterion of truth value). Since both these criteria differ in their logical ground, and Aristotle's doctrine of square of opposition is based on the predicate-criterion of truth value; therefore, his doctrine cannot be invalidated on the ground of subject-criterion of truth value. Aristotle's doctrine would have become invalid had it been shown by the modern logicians that A and E proposition are true and I and O propositions are false in certain cases on the ground of predicate criterion of truth value, not on the ground of subject criterion of truth value. This modern logicians have not done. Therefore, Aristotle's doctrine still stands valid, even if it is accepted that emptiness of a class referred to by the subject of a proposition makes the proposition false. Both the criteria are not incompatible as they differ in their logical grounds.

iii) Although modern logicians adopt different criterion of truth value than that of Aristotle in refuting his doctrine of square of opposition, yet so far as the symbolization of both types of propositions is concerned, that is, propositions whose subject terms refer to non-empty classes and propositions whose subject terms refer to empty classes, they do not maintain the distinction. They symbolize both



the subject-negation and the predicate-negation in the same fashion. As a result of it, instead of offering the solution to the problem, they create more confusions. Their analysis of proposition is not neat and clean.

- iv) Above all, truth and falsity are a kind of predicates that are predicated to propositions. This is what generally is accepted. Now, if emptiness of a class referred to by the subject term of a proposition makes, on the modern view, that proposition false then it amounts to saying that it is the subject not the predicate that is false of a certain object specified by the subject of a proposition, irrespective of whether any predicate is predicated to that object or not. But to accept this view would not only compel them to treat the subject and the predicate alike in their logical status but also to equate referring function with describing function. This is because the subject term of a proposition which refers to nothing attributes the property of falsity with which modern logicians will never agree. But nonetheless it follows from their subject-criterion of falsity.

Thus, in short, from the above discussions we find that modern logicians have not succeeded in refuting Aristotle's doctrine of square of opposition. Their analysis itself defeats their objective.

Department of Philosophy,  
NEHU, Shillong-14,  
(Meghalaya).

JAGAT PAL



## INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATIONS

Daya Krishna and A. M. Ghose ( eds ) **Contemporary Philosophical Problems : Some Classical Indian Perspectives**, Rs. 10/-

S. V. Bokil ( Tran ) **Elements of Metaphysics Within the Reach of Everyone**, Rs. 25/-

A. P. Rao, **Three Lectures on John Rawls**, Rs. 10/-

Ramchandra Gandhi (ed) **Language, Tradition and Modern Civilization**, Rs. 50/-

S. S. Barlingay, **Beliefs, Reasons and Reflections**, Rs. 70/-

Daya Krishna, A. M. Ghose and P. K. Srivastav (eds)  
**The Philosophy of Kalidas Bhattacharyya**, Rs. 60/-

M. P. Marathe, Meena A. Kelkar and P. P. Gokhale (eds)  
**Studies in Jainism**, Rs. 50/-

R. Sundara Rajan, **Innovative Competence and Social Change**, Rs. 25/-

S. S. Barlingay ( ed ), **A Critical Survey of Completed Research Work in Philosophy in Indian Universities ( upto 1980 )**, Part I, Rs. 50/-

R. K. Gupta, **Exercises in Conceptual Understanding**, Rs. 25/-

Vidyut Aklujkar, **Primacy of Linguistic Units**, Rs. 30/-

**Contact :** The Editor,  
Indian Philosophical Quarterly  
Department of Philosophy  
University of Poona,  
Poona-411 007.



July 1989

## DHARMAKĪRTI ON CRITERIA OF KNOWLEDGE

In this paper \* I intend to consider Dharmakīrti's two<sup>1</sup> important criteria of knowledge, viz. *Avisaṃvādana* or *Avisaṃvādatva* and *A(vi)jñātārthaprakāśakatva*, explain their rationale and bring out the role they play in our epistemic enterprise. The paper has three sections. The first investigates into the need and necessity of the criteria under consideration. The second seeks to highlight their nature and role, while the last intends to study significant implications of them.

### I

#### *Need and Necessity of Criteria*

Since antiquity human knowledge,<sup>2</sup> both in its cognitive and certificatory aspects, has continued to engage attention of the concerned. Initial inquiries of this sort might have been undertaken in the atmosphere of common-sensical thought and deliberation. However, in course of time they went on attaining greater and greater degree of precision and sophistication. At the hands of philosophers like Dharmakīrti various aspects of human epistemic enterprise came to be illuminatively investigated into. Such an enquiry of them brought to our notice certain assets and points of strength of human knowledge. But, on the other hand, it also exposed certain weaknesses and vulnerabilities, to which certain modes of analysing the phenomenon of human knowledge were perhaps inherently open and thus unfortunately gave rise to. From this point of view, Dharmakīrti's

Received : 04-2-89



enquiry into and analysis of human knowledge is important in two ways : (a) advocacy of his own views and (b) critical and yet refreshing evaluation of the views of his predecessors and contemporaries from both Buddhist and non-Buddhist camps. On account of such twin reasons a careful study of Dharmakīrti's enquiry into human knowledge and its analysis deserves a special attention. For, a study of this kind may bring to our notice the sort of questions and issues concerning knowledge which were then seriously considered and enable us also to grasp their appropriate rationale.

As argued elsewhere<sup>3</sup> epistemic enterprise according to Dharmakīrti is basically purposive (*Sahetuka*) in character. Instead of considering knowledge to be valuable for its own sake, he considers it to be important in so far as it is instrumental to *Puruṣārthasiddhi*.<sup>4</sup> Further, this sort of instrumentality of it is determined, according to him, by the fact that the knowledge under consideration enables us to acquire (*Upādāna*) that which is conducive to *Puruṣārthasiddhi* (realisation of legitimate aspirations of human life) and give up (*Hāna*) that which is not so conducive.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the legitimate aspirations of human life are expected to be realised in our life within the framework of Buddha's philosophy and along the path laid down by him. This kind of approach of Dharmakīrti and other Buddhist philosophers like him is clearly an alternative to the one adopted by adherents of various philosophical schools owing their allegiance to the *Vedas* in one form or the other. Both these considerations, viz. instrumentality of our epistemic enterprise to *Puruṣārthasiddhi* and the appropriate relation of *Puruṣārthasiddhi* to the philosophy of the Buddha and the path laid down by him, have number of implications;<sup>6</sup> however, for fear of digression we cannot go into the details of them here.



*Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge*

Before we spell out the need and necessity of criteria of knowledge according to Dharmakīrti let us give a brief sketch of the kinds of cognitions that we have according to him.

It is a fact that we know or comprehend. The knowledge or comprehension we have, becomes available to us either directly (*Aparokṣa*) or indirectly (*Parokṣa*).<sup>7</sup> Since over and above these two there is none, Dharmakīrti and other Buddhist philosophers hold that there are only two modes of comprehension, viz. *Pratyakṣa* (Perception) and *Anumāna* (Inference). The number and nature of *Pramāṇas* (modes of comprehending) are determined by *Prameyas* (knowables) they enable us to comprehend.<sup>8</sup> Since there are only two kinds of knowables, viz. *Svalakṣaṇas* and *Sāmānyalakṣaṇas*, and since both of them cannot be known with the help of the same *Pramāṇa*, there are two *Pramāṇas*, viz. *Pratyakṣa* and *Anumāna* respectively to know them.<sup>9</sup> If *Svalakṣaṇa* and *Sāmānyalakṣaṇa* are viewed as two distinct sorts of objects known respectively through *Pratyakṣa* and *Anumāna*, since, on this view, there is nothing common to objects of perceptual and inferential cognitions as also to the cognitions under considerations, then two unpalatable consequences follow : (a) the world would be compartmentalised and (b) our knowledge of the world would also be compartmentalised. Dharmakīrti, for obvious reasons, does not and cannot subscribe to this view.<sup>10</sup> But, at the same time, he would neither give up duality of knowables nor that of *Pramāṇas*. Accordingly, knowables known through *Pratyakṣa* and *Anumāna* need perhaps to be understood as features of an (cluster-like) object rather than some static or changing objects themselves. In the light of *Anityatā* and *Anattā* to which Dharmakīrti subscribes, objects and persons need perhaps to be understood as changing clusters of features, rather than some or the other kind of static-entities.<sup>11</sup> Taken in this way, becoming turns out



to be basic rather than being in contradistinction with many philosophical strands. This has many implications; however, for fear of digression we cannot go into them here.

Understanding, then, that *Pratyakṣa* enables us to know such *Svalakṣaṇātma* features of an object, which are unique, particular, non-sharable in-communicable, instancial and yet experienceable, through *Anumāna* we comprehend general, sharable and communicable features. The former we know directly and empirically.<sup>12</sup> They are held to be what they are (*Paramārtha Sat*) not only on the ground of their being incommunicable (*Kalpanā-apodha*) but also because, other things remaining the same, they are non-deceptive (*abhrānta*). The latter we comprehend indirectly and inferentially in so far as they are communicable and coherently conceivable (*Loka Samvṛtti Sat*).<sup>13</sup> The clusters of features which we may thus comprehend exhibit a fairly long range such that on the one extreme of it we have such a cluster every feature of which is *Svalakṣaṇa*, while on the other extreme we have such a cluster each feature of which is sharable. The cluster nearest to the extreme on the former extreme is the one at least one member of which is sharable, while the one nearest to the cluster of features on the latter extreme is the one at least one member of which is non-sharable i.e. *Svalakṣaṇa*. In between them, further, there could be whole range of clusters of features some of which are non-sharable while others are sharable. There could be preponderance of the former over the latter or *vice versa*. Accordingly, they would be locatable along the whole range of comprehensible clusters of features. Thus understood, various such clusters turn out to be complementary to one another rather than their being dichotomised and compartmentalised. In so far as such clusters are discrete and liable to change, there could be an overlap between simultaneously or successively presented clusters, although stability of



*Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge*

none. This kind of epistemic simultaneity or continuity through succession of clusters which we comprehend also demands their complementarity. This sort of complementarity of clusters that we comprehend also has certain implications; however, for fear of digression we cannot go into details of them here.

Further, whether we cognise perceptually or inferentially, directly or indirectly, cognitive aspect of our epistemic enterprise demands satisfaction of one minimum condition. It is this that there should be at least one person. It would, therefore, be extravagant to hold, according to Dharmakīrti, that social context or communicative situation is a necessary condition of cognition—no matter whether perceptual or inferential. Holding, therefore, what *Naiyāyikas* and some Buddhists also call *Nirvikalpa Pratyakṣa* to be primary and only genuine perceptual cognition and, likewise, *Svārthānumāna* to be primary in the case of inferential cognition are uniform and complementary features of Dharmakīrti's epistemology.<sup>13</sup>

If we consider our epistemic enterprise then two complementary features of it come to surface. They are : (a) we cognise, and (b) we advance a claim that we have cognised such and such a feature. The latter of these necessarily presupposes the former, although the converse of this is not defensible. But right at this juncture there arises a complicated problem. The problem is : on what basis can we claim that such and such a feature, cognised by us, is acceptable or respectable. For the fact that we have cognised such and such a feature is not a matter of circulating subjective opinion. How are we, then, to establish that our cognition is non-subjectively viable? In the face of such a difficulty three *prima facie* viable alternatives may be proposed : (1) On the one hand, it may be held that the very mode of cognition itself brings forth the acceptability of the concerned cognition. However, in trying to make sense of



viability or acceptability of our cognition in this way two unsurmountable difficulties confront us. First, as noted above, our cognitions—perceptual or inferential—are subjective in their occurrence. Starting from this kind of subjectivity of occurrence of cognition it would not be possible to have objective and interpersonal basis relying on which viability of our cognition could be established, without allowing it to lapse into either arbitrariness or subjectivity. Secondly, if it is held that perceptual cognition is viable because it is perceptual, and inferential cognition is viable in so far as it is inferential, then this view turns out to be totally blind to the fact that both perceptual and inferential cognitions, sometimes at least, turn out to be deceptive, erroneous and hence unviable. But they too are subjective in their occurrence. Given this, it can no longer be held that perception makes perceptual cognition viable, while ratiocination makes inferential cognition viable. *Utpattau Prāmāṇya* view stands unfortunately exposed to this sort of difficulty. (2) On the other hand, it could be held that viability or unviability of the respective cognitions are structural or built-in features of them, and in so far as this is the case such a feature of the concerned cognition makes it viable or otherwise. This seems to be the view advocated by *Sāṃkhya*s. *Mīmāṃsakas*, on the contrary, seem to hold that viability is a built-in feature of viable knowledge in so far as it has not been contradicted (*Abādhita*), while unviability of a cognition is brought out through its being contradicted. This view also remains vulnerable at least on two counts: First, on it viability becomes a permanent, indelible and incontestable feature of cognition. But this amounts to either ignoring possibility of error in our cognition or else immunising it against fallibility and revisibility of it. Whichever way it is considered it is counter-intuitive to say the least. Secondly, it closes the very possibility of growth and development of knowledge, contestability of claims advanced on



*Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge*

the basis of cognition and also of our coming to discover hitherto undiscovered or undisclosed features. It is an intuitive constraint on our analysis of epistemic enterprise that it should not close these possibilities. Having disregarded this kind of intuitive demand we cannot, at the same time, hope our analysis of our cognition to be satisfactory. (3) Thirdly, it may be held that what makes our cognition viable is the fact that it matches or corresponds with that of which it is a cognition. In so far as it matches it is viable, while in so far as it does not, it is not viable. This view, advocated by *Nyāya* philosophers, too, is unfortunately open to two weaknesses and vulnerabilities. First, it holds that cognition—no matter whether perceptual, inferential or of any other sort—is essentially public in its occurrence. This is counter-intuitive. But, secondly, it seems to unwittingly force us to subscribe to a kind of platonism which not only goes against the principle of simplicity or economy, which is a methodologically respectable demand, but it also forces us to accept that alternative approaches must be considered to be unacceptable just because and in so far as they are alternatives to the cherished view. This too is difficult to subscribe to since it is not only counter-intuitive but methodologically indefensible as well.

On this background, it becomes evident as to why Dharmakīrti explores into, discovers and explains the nature of the two important criteria of knowledge, viz. *Avisaṃvādana* or *Avisaṃvādakatva* and *A(vi)jñātārthaprakāśakatva*, which not only enable him to circumvent the sort of difficulties stated above in his analysis of human cognition but also bring forth such tenets of it which not only make perceptual and inferential cognitions essentially complementary to each other but also keep the doors of growth and development of knowledge, contestability and revisibility of interpretations of Buddha's philosophy etc. perma-



nently open and thereby also avoid dogmatism. To be able to see this we need to explain Dharmakīrti's criteria of knowledge. This is our task in the next section.

## II

### *Criteria of Knowledge*

It was observed above that according to Dharmakīrti the distinction between context of cognition and that of certification with reference to both perceptual and inferential knowledge, should never be ignored or circumvented. But, at the same time, perceptual or inferential cognitions cannot be held to be certifiable on the basis of their similar subjective mode of occurrence. For, as remarked above, that would rule out the possibility of objective and inter-personally sharable mode of certification of our knowledge-claims. And this would make non-sense of an important aspect of our epistemic enterprise, viz. certificatory epistemology. Hence, appropriate avenue of certification needs to be searched elsewhere. In this context certain kind of structural or built-in feature of knowledge and the known etc. offer themselves as *prima facie* plausible alternatives. Nonetheless, as indicated above, each of them is fraught with one or the other unsurmountable difficulty, as a result of which none of them is acceptable to Dharmakīrti. Accordingly, he provides a different kind of approach concerning certification or acceptability of our perceptual or inferential cognitions which could be called criterial or regulative.

While advocating and articulating such an approach, which perhaps was put forth by Dharmakīrti for the first time at least in the intellectual climate of the Indian sub-continent, he is careful not to ignore two points of seminal importance regarding perceptual and inferential cognitions in his philosophy. They are:

(a) Knowables (*viśaya*) known with the help of these modes of



*Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge*

cognition are distinct and different. For, perception enables us to cognise only *Svalakṣaṇas*, while inferential cognition *Sāmānyalakṣaṇas* alone, and that none of them is reducible to or subsumable under the other. (b) Though these two modes of cognition are distinct according to Dharmakīrti, they are, nonetheless, on par with each other.<sup>15</sup> In consequence, neither perception could be held to be instrumental to inferential cognition nor inferential cognition to perceptual cognition. This sort of relationship between them needs to be understood both cognitively as well as certificatorily. For, if what is known perceptually is different from what is known inferentially, then how can our perceptual cognition be shown to be viable on the basis of what is cognised inferentially? Similar consideration holds in the converse direction also. Accepting this, however, does not amount to compartmentalization of our epistemic enterprise. Because even though what we cognise perceptually or inferentially is a different sort of feature—respectively *Svalakṣaṇātmanā* and *Sāmānyalakṣaṇātmanā*—yet from this it does not follow that, therefore, similar mode of showing acceptability of them should not be available. We remarked above that one way of making sense of this approach could be to hold that whatever we cognise is either a cluster of non-sharable features only or of sharable features only, or else a cluster of both sharable as well as non-sharable features. This could, however, be held to be a sort of ontological way of establishing contact between two modes of cognition, at least in so far as they amount to be cognitions of different features. On this consideration knowables could be either homogeneous or heterogeneous clusters, although perhaps contingently and non-purposively (*Nirhetuka*). Yet, the fact remains that this way of making sense of the possibility of contact between and complementarity of perceptual and inferential cognitions has some kind of ontological and yet

... 6



contingent consideration behind it. In so far as this is or could be the case, it cannot methodologically be said to be an altogether satisfactory way of circumventing the possibility of compartmentalization of the two characteristic modes of cognition available to us.

Moreover, cognition or certification of our knowledge-claims are basically epistemological concerns and they need perhaps to be made an appropriate sense of in the domain of epistemology, without, as far as possible, bringing in ontological or metaphysical overtones, although we can certainly requisition the services of appropriate methodological and intuitive demands on our epistemic enterprise and our mode of making sense of it. This does not mean that ontological considerations cannot even be brought in by way of re-inforcive and strengthening device. Nonetheless, basic concerns regarding cognitive or certificatory aspects of our knowledge should be made sense of, according to Dharmakīrti, without primarily dragging in any ontological consideration. This also enables him to avoid falling excessively prey to a realistic demand of using correspondence between cognition and the cognised as a mode of certification of our cognition.

Dharmakīrti's criterial approach regarding certification of our knowledge-claims enables him to consider and discuss a novel way of showing our cognitions to be viable. This he does within the domain of epistemology and only within the framework of certain methodological and intuitive demands, without bringing in ontological overtones. But even granting that Dharmakīrti adopts criterial approach regarding certification of our knowledge-claims, it could be asked : what sort of criteria of viability of knowledge does Dharmakīrti provide—definitionally guaranteeing or regulatively authorising ? For, depending upon the sort of criteria they are, the mode of certification of knowledge-



*Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge*

claims they would make available would differ in certain fundamental respects. And, if we are not aware of this distinction then we might expect Dharmakīrti to provide one sort of criteria, when he intends, as a matter of fact, to provide of a different sort, and our expectation may thus come to be belied. Likewise, we would also fail to understand the rationale of the criteria provided by him. In order not to give rise to this kind of confusion let us briefly look into the distinction between the two sorts of criteria under consideration.

Guaranteeing or defining criterion is exception-intolerant and applies never-failingly. In other words, it advocates *Avinābhāva* between the criterion on the one hand and that to which the criterion applies on the other. For instance, definition of a triangle that it is a figure bound by three straight lines. If the given figure is bound by three straight lines then it must be a triangle, and conversely, if the given figure is a triangle then it cannot fail, in Euclidian geometry, to be bound by three straight lines. Thus, in the case of a definitional or guaranteeing criterion the definiendum and definiens cannot mutually fail to capture each other. Every criterion, however, need not necessarily be a defining or guaranteeing criterion for its being considered to be a criterion at all. It could be an authorising criterion instead. For instance, litmus-paper test used by chemist which authorises him to declare that the given chemical compound is an acid, or sulphuric-acid test used by a goldsmith which authorises him to hold that the given piece of yellow metal is gold. Such a criterion may not and often does not tell us what sort of chemical or atomic structure the given acid or yellow metal has. It, nevertheless, enables the concerned, in the given circumstance, to decide the issue at hand unambiguously on the fulfilment of certain minimum conditions. To insist that every criterion must be defining or guaranteeing one is too



stringent and hence methodologically suffocating. For, authorising criteria enable us to take a certain vital decision and make appropriate choices in spite of the fact that we do not have defining or guaranteeing criterion. To ignore such criteria just because they are not of the latter kind is to deprive ourselves of an important device. Such a move is not only methodologically too strong and pragmatically and intuitively uncalled for but unwarranted as well.

Dharmakīrti's two important criteria of knowledge,<sup>16</sup> viz. *Avisaṃvādatva* and *A(vi)jñātārthaprakāśakatva* are such regulatively authorising criteria of human cognition rather than defining or guaranteeing criteria of it. This is so because none of them tells us what sort of the given cognition is or what its principal kinds are. Likewise, they do not guarantee that our cognition, once considered to be viable on the fulfilment of certain conditions, must continue to be so come what may. Such is the case because not only no knowledge-claim is final and irrevocable but also that it is methodologically indefensible and intuitively unnecessary to bestow such a status on it for its being considered to be viable. What is sufficient is that our quest after knowledge is not made impossible. Likewise, our conception of knowledge should not make such a quest dispensable, and certification of our knowledge either impossible or redundant. The criteria laid down by Dharmakīrti, as will be argued below, enable us precisely to do this without forcing us to subscribe to the view that there is 'the cognition' or that it is permanent or exceptionlessly final.<sup>17</sup> They, however, authorise us to consider as unambiguously as possible and on the fulfilment of such minimally necessary conditions that a given cognition or knowledge-claim is viable or respectable. This keeps the possibility and necessity of our embarking upon epistemic enterprise permanently open. Yet, at the same



*Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge*

time, it forewarns us, as it were, that none of our cognition or knowledge claim is final and irrevocable. We shall study later on some important implications of this. But before that it is necessary to present a sketch of the two criteria under consideration and explain their nature in such a way that we do not unwittingly miss any of their important tenets. It is to this that we now turn.

The criteria of *Avisaṃvādatva* and/or *A(vi)jñātārthapra-kaśakatva* are laid down on the level of human cognition in general.<sup>18</sup> According to Dharmakīrti we can have only two kinds of knowledge—viz. perceptual and inferential. Hence, these criteria are applicable to them both collectively and distributively. However, in the case of each kind of cognition, irrespective of fundamental differences between them, they must similarly authorise us to consider them to be viable. Secondly, intuitively it is necessary that in so far as perceptual and inferential cognitions are distinct and their respective knowables also are different, applicability of the same criteria under consideration to them should neither make caricature of these distinctions nor should annihilate them altogether. Thirdly, the two criteria should be such that one of them could be neither subsumed under nor reduced to the other, for in the absence of this their plurality would be deceptive. With these points in the background we give below an outline of Dharmakīrti's criteria of knowledge.

(i) *Avaisaṃvādanam* [*Avisaṃvāditvam* (*Avisaṃvādatva*) -

We would be authorised to consider any knowledge as viable or reliable (*Pramāṇam*) provided or in so far as it is free from inconsistency or incoherence (*Viśaṃvādanam*), since on account of its being infected by (*Tad yogāt*) inconsistency it becomes deceptive (*Vañcanam*) and therefore useless.<sup>19</sup> But how is one to comprehend such viability (*Pramāṇayogyatā*) of knowledge on account of its freedom from inconsistency, (*Avaisaṃ-*



*vādanam*) ?<sup>20</sup> It can neither be said to be a feature disclosed by knowledge itself (*Na pramāṇyasya svato gatiḥ*)<sup>21</sup> or a built-in feature of it (*Svato 'bādhitvam*).<sup>22</sup> For, on the former count reliability of knowledge becomes circular. On the latter, on the contrary, its contestability and later defeasibility is jeopardised. Both these alternatives are, therefore, unacceptable. How then are we to comprehend that our cognition—perceptual or inferential—is viable? In answer to this we are told that reliability of knowledge needs to be understood in terms of its serviceability (*Vyavahāra*) to our actions (*Kriyā*)<sup>23</sup> or dispositions (*Pravṛtti*).<sup>24</sup>

Our actions and dispositions are incited by cognitions, and the former could only be coherently or non-deceptively related with the latter provided they (actions and dispositions) authorisingly enable us to acquire (*Upādāna*) or reject (*Hāna*) objects of perceptual or inferential cognitions, in so far as such acquisition or rejection of objects is instrumental to *Purusārthasiddhi* within the framework of Buddha's philosophy and appropriate interpretation of it.

This sort of efficacious or serviceably coherent correlation of our actions or dispositions, incited as it were by the sort of knowables which we cognise, remains similar no matter whether the knowable is external or internal.<sup>25</sup> And since perceptual mode of cognition is experiential or empirical in character, this amounts to establishing serviceable or pragmatically coherent correlation of our actions and dispositions incited by our experience with Buddha's philosophy, through appropriate interpretation of it. On the other hand, inferential cognition brings forth similar kind of correlation of our actions and dispositions with Buddha's philosophy in thought or in so far as the knowables which incite the (actions and dispositions) are coherently conceivable. Thus considered, *Avisaṃvādanam* furni-



*Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge*

shes a general background on the basis of which our actions and dispositions could be linked non-deceptively with our experience and/or thought on the one hand and Buddha's teaching and its appropriate interpretation on the other, in so far as they are not incoherent with each other. This sort of coherence of them could be authorisingly gauged along the following lines : Knowables known perceptually or inferentially incite actions or dispositions on our part resulting into acceptance or rejection of the knowables under consideration non-deceptively, provided such an acceptance or rejection of them is coherently instrumental to *Purusārthasiddhi* in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha.

Ultimately, therefore, the primary move we make in our certificatory epistemology, viz. to have authorisation that our perceptual or inferential cognitions from time to time are viable on the ground of their not being incoherent with Buddha's teaching, is, after all, a short term goal. For, in the long run it is more a question of various aspects of our life – experience, thought and modes of action and disposition – being coherent with Buddha's teaching. Here, realization of short-term goal is held to be instrumental to the realization of the long-term goal.

In this context also the notion of a cluster remains refreshingly illuminative. For, if our life itself is a cluster of experiences, thoughts and modes of actions and dispositions we adopt from time to time, then an assurance about any of them that it is coherent with Buddha's teaching would automatically result into an assurance, in the long run, that our life too is likewise coherent. This is especially because our life is nothing beyond such a cluster. And in the case of a cluster, if we have an assurance about each of its members then there is nothing on the count of assurance regarding the cluster over and above assurance about its members. This sort, of assurance could only be had epistemologically on the basis



that two principal modes of cognition open to us are not only complementary to each other but are also coherent with Buddha's teaching. This could be discovered via our actions and dispositions incited by them being non-deceptive, i.e. non-incoherent with Buddha's teaching.<sup>26</sup> This sort of assurance concerning different cognitions we have, and the different domains—of fact and that of coherently conceivable—with which they are connected/correlated, are subject to the same kind of uniform regulative control which authorises us to hold that actions and dispositions incited by cognitions are non-deceitful of or non-incoherent with Buddha's teaching and its appropriate interpretation. It is this sort of authorisation that the criterion of *Avisaṃvādana* is supposed to issue which authorises us to hold that the way we are living is not at variance from the way the Buddha expects us to live. In the world of constant change and becoming we are continuously on trial, and we need to non-deceptively assure ourselves at different junctures of our life that we are not living in a way that is incongruent with Buddha's teaching. It is this sort of assurance that is expected to come forth from *Avisaṃvādana* to which our cognitions and modes of actions and dispositions incited by them are repeatedly subjected. In the absence of this sort of assurance we may deceptively hold that not only our cognitions but also actions and dispositions prompted by them are coherent with Buddha's teaching, though as a matter of fact they are not. Or else, we might hold their coherence even though we are unable to defend our claim in any respectable way. Both of them are deceptive and hence unacceptable. The non-deceptive assurance under consideration is not supposed to be anchored in subjectivity. It is rather anchored in sharable and objectively regulative uniform control that authorises us to hold our life to be coherent with Buddha's teaching, no matter whether it is related with the factual or the coherently conceivable world through appropriate actions and dispositions incited by their res-



pective cognitions. It is this sort of assurance that the criterion of *Avisaṃvādana* provides. It should not be held to be a matter of sheer accident, therefore, that Dharmakīrti links his discussion of the criteria of reliability of knowledge with a sketch of the philosophy and teaching of the Buddha along with the rationale of its acceptability discussed in the very next section of the same chapter of his *Pramāṇavārtika*.<sup>27</sup>

(ii) *A(vi)jñātārthaprakāśakatva*-- Any knowable, in so far as it is capable of being correlated with actions and dispositions incited by it, is essentially impermanent. The cognition too is impermanent.<sup>28</sup> Thus, when *Anityatā* as an inalienable feature not only of knowable, knowledge as well as its reliability is sought to be made an appropriate sense of, it brings forth another important aspect of our knowledge, and actions and dispositions incited by it. We said above that various aspects of our life-experience, thought and modes of actions and dispositions—are sought to be non-incoherently and non-deceptively correlated with Buddha's teaching and its appropriate interpretation. We do this through subjecting our actions and dispositions prompted by cognitions—perceptual or inferential—to repeated uniform test and trial. Nonetheless, through our cognitions at different times and circumstances, hitherto undisclosed (*Prakāśanam Prakāśaḥ ajñātasya arthasya Prakāśo jñānam*)<sup>29</sup> features of knowables may come to be discovered non-deceptively. This is especially because although each knowable—perceptual or inferential—is a changing cluster of features, yet in any cognition of it we may not cognise all features which have made it up.<sup>30</sup> Some of them may be disclosed in later cognitions. This sort of disclosure brings forth novelty of new features. But such a novelty could be extended to grasping hitherto undisclosed mode of coherence of our actions and dispositions with Buddha's teaching or an appropriate interpretation of it. Extending it still further, and



understanding the issue hermeneutically, it could be held that novel modes of interpreting Buddha's philosophy and discovering its relevance to the changing circumstances and contexts would continue to surface. The older ones may be challenged and contested and as a result of this in the changing world we constantly run a risk, in our epistemic enterprise, of being forced to alter, revise, modify our knowledge-claims. Thus, the criterion of *Ajñātārthaprakāśakatva* authorises us, in face of impermanence and becoming, to consider no knowledge-claim, mode of its certification, or interpretation or discovery of relevance of Buddha's philosophy with reference to certain context to be ever final, irrevocable and uncontestable. Hence, as quest after knowledge is interminable in principle, so also our search for appropriate interpretation and continued relevance of Buddha's teaching and philosophy is an on-going process. Though no truth is *the truth*, search after truth by nature is interminable, in the hope that we might discover a better truth. Impermanence and changeability explodes the myth of final, irrevocable truth; but it also pricks the bubble of the misplaced arrogance of ego to consider itself to be substantial and stable, or even of its being in possession of an unalterable truth. On the larger background of Buddha's philosophy and teaching our search after better and better modes of living life in way that is non-incoherent with and non-deceptive of Buddha's approach is on-going and interminable in character, although at no stage could it be final. For, the search for such coherence is not expected to be carried out merely in the world of coherently conceivable but also in the world we actually live in,<sup>31</sup> although both are fraught with similar changeability.

A question may, however, be asked : If and in so far as the hitherto undisclosed features which we may come to discover cannot fall outside the domain of coherently conceivable, why



*Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge*

can the second criterion not be implied by the first and therefore held to be subsumable under it? Further, given this, the plurality of criteria falls to the ground, and thus there remains only one criterion viz. *Avisaṃvādana*. This is more in tune with the methodological principle of simplicity as well.<sup>32</sup> The argument is, however, both misleading and deceptive. It is misleading because it ignores the distinction between coherently conceivable understood merely plausibilistically<sup>33</sup> and the factual, however non-purposive and contingent the latter may be. For, although the world of coherently conceivable could be immunised, through engineered rules or fiat, from its being subject to changeability, such can hardly be the case with reference to facts. It is deceptive also in so far as it misses the distinction between something cognised in thought and that in experience, and thus unwittingly seeks to subsume empirical experience under thought. The need for such a distinction could be seen provided we understand that while nature of coherently conceivable could be considered in thought fairly in the atmosphere of freedom from context, this kind of facility is hardly available with reference to that which is given in fact. It needs no elaborate argument to show that on both these counts the argument under consideration is unacceptable. Hence, although the discovery of hitherto undisclosed features does not transgress the limit and boundary of the coherently conceivable, yet the former is particularly alive to the fact of changeability, impermanence and revisibility which may be overshadowed by mere absence of inconsistency. Therefore, the two criteria under consideration should be held to be complementary to each other, rather than competitive and alternative. They cannot be subsumed under or reduced to each other. The complementarity of them, further, needs to be understood mutually and reciprocally.<sup>34</sup> The criterion of *Avisaṃvādana*, as stated earlier, furnishes the general context of Buddha's philosophy, with which



our epistemic enterprise and actions as well as dispositions incited by it are expected to be coherent. It is this which makes them appropriately instrumental to *Puruṣārthasiddhi* through *Hāna* and *Upādāna*. But it does not rule out plurality of interpretations of Buddha's philosophy in face of changing circumstances and situations, and epistemic and hermeneutical demands they make on the philosophy and teaching of the Buddha especially on the count of their continued relevance. Such plural interpretations no doubt bring forth hitherto undiscovered aspects of Buddha's philosophy. They are, however, required to be coherent not only among themselves but with Buddha's philosophy as well. Thus, starting with Buddha's philosophy and proceeding in the direction of studying its continued relevance to changing world, circumstances, situations and conditions of our life, newer and hitherto undisclosed aspects of the teaching and philosophy of the Buddha have to be unearthed and discovered; but they are required to be regulatively controlled by coherence. Conversely, starting with coherence and combining it with Buddha's philosophy it is required to be ensured that one and only one interpretation of it does not dogmatically come to be regimented mechanically even in face of changing world and circumstances. For, that would be tantamount to attaching finality and uncontestability to the interpretation under consideration, and closing the doors of growth and development of our understanding of Buddha's philosophy in face of impermanence and becoming, no matter with reference to resolution of problems faced in this world or otherwise, as also with reference to our being able to adopt such a mould of life that enables us to transcend limitations of constancy and stability of person, circumstance or both.<sup>26</sup> Thus, in whichever direction we seek to understand the relationship between the two criteria under consideration their plurality i.e., duality and mutuality are such tenets of them the



*Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge*

rejection of or compromise with any of which is disastrous both intuitively and methodologically. It is this sort of nature and explanation of them that makes them so essential and indispensable not only in Dharmakīrti's philosophy but in Buddhist or any other sort of philosophical consideration as well.

## III

*Implications of Dharmakīrti's Criteria of Knowledge*

In the two preceding sections we outlined the rationale and nature of the two criteria of knowledge accepted by Dharmakīrti. On this background, in this section, we proceed to give a sketch of their philosophically and intellectually important implications. First, even when general engagement with and continued subscription to Buddha's philosophy and teaching is granted, this in itself should not close in advance the doors of the need and necessity of its variant interpretations – not only exegetically but along hermeneutical lines as well – and consideration of their continued relevance in face of changing world (*Anityatā*). But on the other hand, such an endeavour should also not rule out by a fiat contestability and revisibility of any of such interpretations. For, neither subscription to Buddha's philosophy is a matter of blind faith and dogmatism, nor is plurality of its interpretation given rise to just for the fun and fancy of it. The two criteria under consideration seek to blend both these needs and dispositions in such a way that irrational extension of the demands of one does not take a toll of the reasonable and just demands of the other.

Secondly, given variant interpretations of Buddha's philosophy and his teaching, each of them would bring forth a certain cluster of concepts. The problem of an appropriate interpretation of Buddha's philosophy and its continued relevance will continue to crop up in face of changing circumstances or situations and



the demands they make on our life – especially as to which sort of actions, modes of fellowship and dispositions should we adopt in face of them which would remain non-incoherent with Buddha's philosophy. The way out of such a difficulty is not mechanical collection of various concepts floated through various interpretations of Buddha's philosophy. Under such circumstance we may have to discriminate between various interpretations, the cluster of concepts they bring forth, and bring in newer concepts or interpretation if that is unavoidable, so that we neither ignore importance of relevance of Buddha's philosophy in face of changing circumstance nor do we stick dogmatically to one interpretation of it on account of security and immunity from risks it provides. For, security is important; but ignoring exposure to risks or turning back upon them is suicidal. The criteria under consideration provide such an appropriate rationale of requisite discrimination between satisfaction of the demands made from two sides – methodological demand of coherence and non-deceptivity, and intuitive demand of novelty, and enable us to take care of them neither naively nor irrationally, and hence indefensibly.

Thirdly, in the case of the study of the philosophy of an important philosopher like Dharmakīrti, comprehension of its appropriate conceptual framework is important. But it is misleading to hold that it is presented in a single treatise of his or made available through the mode of resolution of a single issue. It is likewise incorrect to hold that it is epitomised in a particular perspective that he adopts, or that it could be available only via etymological, philological or grammatical considerations regarding certain expressions he uses in his works. These considerations are important as far as they go, but none of them could be elevated to the status of the sole concern which is important at the exclusion of other philosophically important



*Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge*

ones. In such an appropriate conceptual framework of his philosophy such features and aspects of it need to be coherently grouped together and interconnected so that in their light such salient tenets of Buddha's philosophy as consideration of *Anityatā* (impermanence), *Anattā* or *Anātmata* (non-egoity), *Santāna* (flow or succession), *Duḥkṣa-nirodha* (possibility of cessation of pain and suffering in our life), repudiation of *Sahetukatā* (purposiveness) as isomorphic with *Sakāraṇatā* (causation) etc. would neither be caricatured nor ignored. But, on the other hand, the avenues of its possible extension in the direction of resolution of a problem thrown up by changed circumstances and contexts too should not be closed arbitrarily or through an engineered principle.

Fourthly, while addressing ourselves to the task of studying Buddha's – or anyone else's – philosophy and bringing out its continued relevance and significance with reference to or in face of changed circumstances and contexts we should not ignore seminal importance of two considerations : (a) those intuitive considerations like novelty and changeability which need to be respected should not be ignored and sidetracked, and counter-intuitive considerations should not be substituted for them just for fancy or in defence of a dogma. (b) Certain methodological considerations like coherence, simplicity etc. must not be compromised with just because such compromises are likely to pay greater dividend on the count of mass-acceptability or naive submission to the demand of popularity.

Lastly, a philosopher worth the name should make a discrimination between lure of popularity on the one hand and insulation and immunisation provided through a resolution of a problem through subscription to a dogma on the other. To the extent to which he remains equi-distant from these two traps he could be said to have followed what in Buddhist philosophy is significantly



called *Madhymā Pratipad*, a count on which Dharmakīrti has shown exemplary courage and transparency. It is this aspect of his philosophy that makes it so much important.\*\*

Department of Philosophy  
University of Poona  
PUNE 411 007.

MANGALA R. CHINCHORE

### NOTES

\* I am deeply indebted to Prof. M. P. Marathe who helped me at various stages in writing this paper.

1. One may *prima-facie* be tempted to count *Avisaṃvādakatva* (non-inconsistency, i. e., coherence), *Vyavahartavyatva* (serviceability) and *Avijñātarthaprakāśakatva* (discloser of hitherto unknown feature/s) as three distinct criteria of knowledge put forth by Dharmakīrti. However, it will be argued below that he intends to bring out different kind of serviceability of perceptual and inferential cognitions especially because their objects are fundamentally different. Such differential serviceability of them under the jurisdiction of *Avisaṃvādakatva* is spelt out by *Vyavahartavyatva*.
2. The expression 'human cognition' or 'human knowledge' came to be coined in the Western intellectual tradition to differentiate man's knowledge from divine knowledge. To the best of our knowledge, till very recently and that too under the western impact, the issue of this sort of demarcation never cropped up in the intellectual atmosphere prevalent in the Indian sub-continent. Consequently, a neutral or secular expression '*jñāna*' was used and it was always understood in the sense of 'human knowledge'. We are using such expressions as 'human cognition', 'human knowledge' etc. more as a matter of current idiom and linguistic practice, and they have nothing to do with the above-mentioned distinction.
3. Chinchore, Mangala R.; *Dharmakīrti's Theory of Hetu-centricity of Anumāna*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1989 (forthcoming), Ch. I.
4. Dharmakīrti; *N. B.*; *Samyagjñānapūrvikā sarvapuruṣārthasiddhiriti tad vyutpādyate*, Cha. 1., p. 1.  
Durveka Miśra; *Dharmottarapradīpa*, pp. 5-6.



5. Dharmakīrti; *P. V.*; *Praāmāṇyāṁ tatra...dhipramāṇatā...heyopādeya-vastuni* / Ch. I. K. 4-5.  
 Manorathanandi; *Vṛtti* on it, p. 5.  
*or* Prajñākara Gupta; *P. V. A.*; ... Heyopādeyaviṣaye pravartakāṁ hi  
*pramāṇamuccyate* / p. 22.  
*or* Dharmottara; *N. B. T.*; *puruṣasyārthaḥ / .....pratipādyate Vyut-*  
*pādyate iti* / pp. 6-7.
6. Dharmakīrti; *P. V.*; *Heyopādeyatattvasya...paratra vā* / Ch. III, K. 218.  
*Svopajñāvr̥tti* on *S. P.*; pp. 72-73 and  
 Karṇakagomin; *Tīkṣā* on it, pp. 394-395.  
 Manorathanandi; *Vṛtti*; p. 324.  
 Prajñākara Gupta; *P. V. A.*; p. 52.
7. Dharmakīrti; *N. B.*; *Dvidvidhaṁ samyagjñānam / Pratyakṣamanu-*  
*mānaśca* / Ch. I. K. 2.  
 Dharmottara; *N. B. T.*; pp. 7-8.  
*or* Dharmakīrti; *P. V.*; Ch. II. K. 75-77.
8. Dharmakīrti; *P. V.*; *Mānam dvidvidhaṁ viṣayadvaividhyāt* / Ch. II. K. 1  
 Manorathanandi; *Vṛtti*, p. 98.
9. Dharmakīrti; *P. V.*; Ch. II, K. 51, 54.
10. Dharmakīrti; *P. V.*; *Artha rūpatvena samānatā ..... samāśrayāt* /  
 Ch. II, K. 10.  
 Manorathanandi; *Vṛtti*; p. 104.  
*or* *Meyāṁ tvekaṁ svalakṣanam...matam* / Ch. II, K. 53-54.  
 Manorathanandi; *Vṛtti*; p. 117.  
*or* Ch. II, K. 62-65, pp. 120-121.
11. Dharmakīrti; *P. V.*; Ch. I, K. 181-182, pp. 63-64.  
 Ch. II, K. 75, p. 124.
12. Manorathanandi; *Vṛtti*; pp. 116-117.
13. Dharmakīrti; *P. V.*, Ch. II, K. 1-3.  
 Manorathanandi; *Vṛtti*, pp. 98-100.  
 Prajñākara Gupta; *P. V. A.*; pp. 169-176.
14. Chinchore, Mangala R., *op. cit.*; Ch. II.
15. Dharmottara; *N. B. T.*; *Pratyakṣānumānayostulyabalatvaṁ samuc-*  
*cinoti* / p. 8.



16. Manorathanandi; *Vṛtti*; Yathokta dvividhalakṣaṇaṁ uktaṁ yat pramāṇam / p. 9.
17. Manorathanandi; *Vṛtti*; Kasmāt punaḥ nityaṁ pramāṇaṁ naivāsti?... nāsti nityaṁ pramāṇyam / p. 9.
18. Manorathanandi; *Vṛtti*; Pramāṇasāmānyalakṣaṇam / p. 3.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
26. *Ibid.*, Yathokta dvividhalakṣaṇam uktaṁ ... ajñātasya prakāśanācca / p. 9.
27. Dharmakirti; *P. V.*; and also Manorathanandi, *Vṛtti*; Ch. I, respectively pages 1-17 and 18-96.
28. Manorathanandi; *P. V.*; Vastunaḥ arthakriyākāriṇaḥ ... adhrauvyāt anityatvāt / pp. 9-10.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
30. *Ibid.*, Ajñātagrahaṇena sāmānyasyāvayavyādiviśayasya; ... vikalpanā / p. 8.
31. *Ibid.*, Nanvavisaṁvādādevājñātārtha prakāśo jñātavyaḥ ... lakṣaṇaṁ syāt / p. 8.
32. *Ibid.*, Nanvavisaṁvādibhyo ... lakṣaṇaṁ boddhavyam / p. 8.
33. *Ibid.*, Syādetad yadi saṁbhavitvamātre lakṣaṇaṁ syāt / p. 8.
34. *Ibid.*, Tasmādubhayamapi ... boddhavyam / p. 8.
35. *Ibid.*, Yadi vyavahārataḥ ... paralokaniḥśreyasādervyavahārāprasiddhasya siddhirbhavati / p. 7.

In this context it would be instructive to consider concepts of *Preyas*, *Śreyas* and *Niśreyas* and philosophical implications of their interrelationship.

\*\* Paper contributed to the Second International Dharmakirti Conference held in Vienna from 11th to 16th June, 1989.



July 1989

## ON THE "INCOMPLETENESS" OF A MUSICAL WORK

It has been said that a musical composition is essentially incomplete, and that it needs completion through performance. I wish, in this paper, to discuss this contention and some issues connected with it. But before doing that, it is essential first of all to determine, what precisely is the identity of a piece of music as a work of art. For this would, I believe, bring out some powerful peculiarities of music as a work of art.

### I

It may be said that, of the identity of a piece of music as a work of art, two kinds of questions may be asked— one metaphysical and the other logical. My interest here is primarily in the logical question. The answer to the metaphysical question, "Is a work of music a physical or a non-physical object?" is obvious enough. Here, I do not wish to go into details but merely to mention that, the metaphysical and the logical questions (which may be of the form, "what in actual fact, are the criteria of identity of a particular work of art?") are intimately connected, and an answer to the one would in most cases lead to an answer to the other. In attempting to find an answer to the logical question, I am guided primarily by an argument of Richard Wollheim's in his rather difficult and terse essay entitled *Art and its Objects*.

Following Wollheim's lead, we might begin by making a distinction between a general entity, or more correctly, a generic

Received : 25-5-88



entity and elements that come under this generic entity. And a general answer to the logical question, "what is a work of music, say a *khayāl*?" might be as follows - *khayāl* is a generic entity, and a particular performance of it is an element that comes under the generic entity. It may be said that there are three different kinds of generic entities viz., type, class or universal with tokens, members and instances respectively, as their elements. The distinction between the three can be most illuminatingly made in terms of the relationship that there is between they themselves and their elements, and the relationship could be said to vary in the degree of what Wollheim calls "intimacy" or "intrinsicity," that an element may have with its corresponding generic entity. Thus, the relationship between the members of a class and the class may be said to be the least intimate or intrinsic, the relationship between a type and its tokens the most intimate, while the relationship of a universal and its instances coming somewhere in between. The different kinds of relationship are also reflected in the different ways in which properties may be shared between an element and a generic entity. A generic entity and its elements may just happen to share certain properties or it may be that an element has a property *because* the generic entity has it and *vice versa* i.e. properties are transmitted between an element and the generic entity.

A musical work is a generic entity which is closest to the generic entity called *type*, and particular performances of the work may be thought of as tokens of this type. An important characteristic of the type/token relationship is that a type and its tokens may not only share properties, but properties are also transmitted from one to the other. It is important to make, for an understanding of the general nature of music, the following points about properties that may be predicated of a type. These are : (i) there are no properties which cannot in principle pass



*On the "Incompleteness" of a Musical Work*

from the token to its type i. e., everything that can be predicated of a performance of a musical work, can also be in principle predicated of the work itself. If the performance is, say moving or rousing, the work itself may be moving or rousing. (Here of course the spatio-temporal properties of a performance are not being considered.) (ii) Although all properties, apart from the spatio-temporal properties of a token, may be transmitted to the type, it is not necessary that they will do so. (iii) In fact it is necessary that not all properties should pass from token to type, although any single property might do so. Among the properties, of which it is necessary that they should not pass from token to type, are the properties generated by the art of interpretation or rendering of, say, a particular piece of music. Such properties of a token might be said to belong to the token in excess, as it were, of the properties that it has by virtue of being a token of the type in question. This, taken along with the previous point, brings us directly to the question of completeness in music. Taking a piece of music to be a type, the earlier point may be restated as : a musical composition is essentially an incomplete type which needs completion through its tokens.

To suppose that something is incomplete ordinarily implies two things. Firstly, that a thing which is incomplete is defective in the sense that it requires something more or lacks some essential feature, and secondly, to suppose that something is incomplete implies that it is in principle capable of being completed.

Taking the second sense first, what would completing a musical work entail? If one were to actually undertake the task of completing a musical work, it would involve the composer indicating every single detail of how a piece of music is to be performed. Perhaps in the case of Western classical music this could, to a certain extent, be imaginable, for here the modern



practice is for the composer to write down at least every note that is to be sung or played on an instrument, with some indication of how it is to be sung or played. One can think of the same process being continued until we have a work over which the performer has no freedom other than to follow, to the minutest detail, the instructions of the composer. But this will have the intolerable consequence of introducing a degree of mechanicality to a musical performance, which is, in the ordinary view of things, alien to it. To envisage this kind of completeness of a musical composition is also to imply the ultimate replacability of the performer, by, say, the computer. Such a thing may indeed come to pass, but what we shall then have will no longer be music in the normal meaning of this word.

However, when we turn to the Indian classical tradition, any attempt to introduce "completeness" to a musical work will reflect a total misunderstanding of the very tradition. Here, the basic melodic form the *rāga*, is merely a very loose structured framework indicating the kinds of notes, the number of notes to be played or sung; no *rāga* can indicate how exactly the notes are to be used. The freedom of the performer here is an essential part not only of his art as a performer but is also a part of the work itself. Here, we can talk of two kinds of freedom: the freedom that is part of the *guru-śiṣya* tradition, and the freedom that the *gharāṇā* system has customarily allowed. Both these kinds of freedom have been responsible for the central place given to the performer in Indian music and, in many cases, for the obliteration of the distinction between the artist and artiste in our music. The discipline imposed by the *guru* on the *śiṣya* always leaves, and must leave, an area of freedom to the *śiṣya* in his performance. For the first five or six years the *śiṣya* relies completely on the guidance of his *guru* who teaches the *śiṣya* everything individually and directly, but gradually the *śiṣya* learns



On the "Incompleteness" of a Musical Work

to improvise, and then in the rendering of a *rāga* he adds to his methodical musical training, that which he draws from within himself. Similarly the discipline of the *gharānā* system must equally leave room for the freedom of a particular member of the *gharānā*. Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's rendering of *Rāga Rāgeshwari* or *Lankeshwari*, *Goonkālī* and *Kaushi Dhani* could serve as revealing examples of this, where while retaining the broad characteristics of *Patiala gāyakī*, the artist transcends the limitations of his own school showing that his individuality is greater than the tradition he imbibed. Paṇḍit Bhīmsen Joshi is another consummate artist, who stands out as having added new dimensions not only to *Kirānā gāyakī* but to the entire tradition of Indian Music. In his rendering of *Rāga Shuddha Kalyāṇa*, while maintaining the systematic note by note elaboration of a *rāga*, so characteristic of the *Kirānā gharānā*, he adds intricate *taan* patterns characteristic of the *Gwalior gharānā*, and presents the *rāga* with subtle innovation and rare artistry. The idea of the freedom of the performer, then, is not peripheral, but central to Indian Music.

## II

The attempt to introduce "completeness" to a musical work seems all the more absurd when one reflects on the Indian aesthetic tradition. According to this tradition, a piece of music, like any other aesthetic object, is a configuration of various elements and the configuration expresses "*rasa*" or the quintessence of an emotion or what some call the aesthetic fact. *Rasa Niṣpatti* or creation of *rasa* is the function of all that is aesthetic. *Rasa* literally meaning "juice" or "extract" is that which gives life or vitalizes an emotion. The function of all art and music is the presentation *rasa* or the resultant of the aesthetic configuration which "consists of situations, mimetic changes, transient emotions and basic emotions, so harmoniously mixed up that the



configuration presents to the aesthete something which is entirely different from that which results from the mere juxtaposition of various elements" <sup>3</sup>. *Rasa* is thus " . . . . . not pure unity but unity in multiplicity. The unifying factor in the multiplicity is a basic state of mind (*Sthāyībhāva*) which binds together in an organic whole (1) the emotive situation in human setting, consisting of the physical cause of the basic mental state (*Vibhāva*), (2) the mimetic changes, which are inspired by the aroused basic mental state and as such are indicative of the internal state (*Anubhāva*) and (3) the transient emotions (*Vyabhicārībhāva*)."

At the heart or core of a musical composition, then, lies the *sthāyībhāva* or the basic persisting emotion which binds the total aesthetic situation of a musical composition together. It is that which keeps the unity of the work together, and that which commands or guides the entire structure and form of artistic creation. The *sthāyībhāva* can thus be likened to Berlioz's "idea fixe" or Langer's "commanding idea", for in its expression the entire structure of the composition is created. Although this basic idea or *bhāva* puts a check on artistic imagination, it is not restrictive, or is restrictive only in a limited sense, i.e., only in so far as it structures too free an artistic imagination. And precisely because of imposing this restriction, the *sthāyībhāva* or "commanding idea", is immensely generative. By restricting too free an imagination the *sthāyībhāva* helps the performer spontaneously, but with understanding, to compose something which is infinitely rich and distilled. Having got a basic guide the performer's mind does not wander from theme to theme, key to key, or mood to mood, or perhaps, if it does wander from one mood to another in a single musical piece, say *Rāga Mālakauns* whose principal mood is *utsāha* or zeal, but in the exposition of the *rāga* the moods of *śoka* or grief, or *vairāgya* or renunciation, may also be expressed, but once the principal mood of *utsāha*



## On the "Incompleteness" of a Musical Work

has been grasped the other moods are brought in only to accentuate the basic mood and add to its expression. The way *sthāyībhāva*, which restricts yet generates, is very significant in Indian music, for Indian music to the uninitiated is seemingly unstructured. An Indian musical recital has endless unforeseen possibilities and because the structures are so flexible there seems to be no structure at all, yet there is in the exposition of a *rāga*, an inner logic, which is essentially dependent on how the *sthāyībhāva* has been grasped by the performer. The *sthāyībhāva* is, then, embodied in the entire work permeating and unifying a *rāga*, but at the same time not restricting creativity, but rather, providing the performer an inexhaustible source of inspiration. The source of inspiration is inexhaustible for the *sthāyībhāva* is an emotion and not only is the very concept of an emotion a very complex one but the matrix of a single emotion is extraordinarily pliable. Taking a single emotion, say love, in expressing it one can express the joy of love, the ecstasy of love, the yearning, the tragedy, the expectancy and so on. The aim of the artist is to express as many different aspects of love as possible such that the overall presentation is that of *śṛṅgāra*.

When it is said that the *sthāyībhāva* of a piece of music is love, the reference may be to a more specific aspect or aspects of love. A *rāga* does not express love so much as it expresses a mood of love, and not a general mood of loving or being loved but a more specific mood. Take Rāga Yaman; this late evening *rāga* sung after the day's fevers and frets are over, suggests an idyllic setting of repose and indolence which gives rise to a yearning for love and one's loved ones. The *vādi* or sonant note of this *rāga* is Ga and the *samvādi* or consonant note is Nī. All the other notes or *svaras* are *śuddha* except Ma which is *tīvra* (sharp). Generally speaking *rāgas* with a dominance of the *śuddha svaras* are likely to have romantic associations, but in



this *rāga* because *Ma* or the fourth note, is *tīvra* or sharp the mood is not merely one of romantic passion or ecstasy but contemplative and pensive too. The stress on *Nī* and *Ga* also induce this mood of quiet contemplation, of love; which in turn give way to yearning for one's loved one. The *sthāyībhāva* is thus *love's longing* and this is the mood which permeates the entire rendering of the *rāga*.

But even such a specific mood as "love's longing" may be variously expressed depending on the intensity of the yearning. *Rāga* Mian Malhār also expresses "love's longing," but here the yearning is much more passionate and poignant. The *vādi* and *samvādi* notes of this *rāga* are *Sa* and *Pa* respectively. *Ga* is *komal* (flat) and both the *nishāds* or seventh notes are used. The passion and intensity of love's yearning is presented through the use of both the *nishāds* in different combinations and the descent from *Nī* to *Pa* with a *gamak* and from *Pa* to *Ga* (*komal*) with a *meend* brings in the feeling of brooding intensity. The prolonged use of both the *nishāds* traversing several *śrutis* increases the tension of yearning before the tension is released in the *vādi* note *Sa*.

The *sthāyībhāva* or the commanding idea may inspire different performers in different ways, thereby making the performer bring to his music that elusive touch which enhances the spirit of the music, and there are no criteria by which to determine which rendering is more complete precisely because there is no need for one. Here, where every performance is itself an act of creation, each musician may bring out different aspects of the same *rāga*, by his relative use of *śrutis* and varying emphasis he gives to different notes and this is dependent on how the *sthāyībhāva* has moved him. An apt example here would be *Rāga* Mālakaunsa which has been rendered by almost all the great artists, and each one has given to it a different flavour.



On the "Incompleteness" of a Musical Work

Ustad Amir Khan, aspiring for depth and repose brings out the profundity of the *rāga*, while Pandit Yeshwant Rao brings out the fluidity and poignancy of the *rāga*. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's powerful rendering makes it an epitome of *utsāha* and *veera*, while Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, through his resilient style and creative use of *śrutis*, makes it sublime.

In fact the same performer at different sessions may also create different moods depending on how the *sthāyībhāva* has moved him. Thus in the Rāga Mian Malhar, at one session the performer may stress on *Ni* thereby increasing the poignancy of the *rāga*, while at another the stress would be on *Pa* and *Ga* (*komal*), which brings in a sense of brood. A *rāga* then can be presented in an indefinite variety of ways and no way will be wrong as long as the artist is guided by the *sthāyībhāva* in such a way that the inner spirit or *rasa*, which is the resultant of the organic whole is presented.

It is obvious, then, that even if one were to agree that a piece of music remains "incomplete," for there are no ways of completing it, it is not a defect in music that it is so. In fact it may even be said that it is a vital facet of a piece of music, such that its essential enduring appeal is sustained and embellished, that it should remain "incomplete" in a different sense of the term. The feeling of incompleteness is necessarily fraught with tension and tension in turn is invariably coupled with a sense of expectancy. The attempt of any great musician is to retain this expectancy by prolonging fulfilment.

A piece of music does not narrate something in the sense of having an orderly progression from a start towards an end either happy or sad. It is as S. K. Langer puts it "..... completely incommensurable with progress of common affairs. Musical duration is an image of what might be termed "lived" or



"experienced" time. The passage of life that we feel as expectations become "now" and "now." " " "

### III

In conclusion I would like to refer to the analysis of the Radha Krishna legend by Sudhir Kakar and John M. Ross in their recent book,<sup>6</sup>. They point out that "though the Radha Krishna love legend is classed amongst the world famous love stories, it is less a story remembered than a random succession of episodes seen and heard, sung and danced. It embodies "an evocation and elaboration of the here and now of passion, an attempt to capture the exciting, fleeting moments of the senses and the baffling ways in which pleasures and pains are felt before the retrospective recollection which, in trying to regain a lost control over emotional life, edits away love's inevitable confusions."<sup>7</sup> As such Radha is seen as an incarnation of a state of permanent amorous tension, "... a here and now of desire that carries within itself a future expectation of pleasurable release..."<sup>8</sup> Radha thus personifies an enduring arousal whose concern is not with gratification but with anticipation. Throughout the legend the attempt of the poet has been to sustain expectancy either through reminiscences or through dalliance, to prolong fulfilment by deliciously postponing delight and thereby suspending ecstasy in time and making it last for ever. The separation of the lovers has also been used by the poet to enhance expectancy. Possession is completion and completion deflates passions, but for a true presentation of *śṛṅgāra* the poet must leave passions in a state of aspiring for fulfilment. Of similar consequence is the attempt of the performer to sustain tension by channelising all creative potentialities and possibilities in a continuous and perennial state of flow. The attempt is to retain the "isness" of the *rasa* of a



*On the "Incompleteness" of a Musical Work*

particular piece of music, and this can only be achieved by keeping away from completion, for that would exhaust all potentialities.

**ROSHMI GOSWAMI**

Foundation Lodge,  
Lower Lachauwier, Shillong - 793001  
(Meghalaya)

**NOTES**

1. Langer, Susan K.; *Feeling and Form* (London, 1953)
2. *Art and its Objects* (Cambridge 1980)
3. *Comparative Aesthetics*, Vol. I (Varanasi 1959)
4. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
5. *Feeling and Form* (London 1953)
6. *Tales of Love, Sex and Danger*. (Oxford University Press, Delhi 1986)
7. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 88.



## ANNOUNCEMENT

### I

#### **Mrs. Gertrude Sachs Memorial Essay Competition**

In the opinion of the referees nominated to adjudicate essays invited on the theme "Modern Society and Tragic Sense of Life" for the Late Mrs. Gertrude Sachs Memorial Essay Competition *no received essay deserved to be awarded first or second prize.*

### II

#### **Prof. G. R. Malkani Essay Competition**

In the opinion of the referees nominated to adjudicate essays invited on the theme "Śaṅkara's Concept of Prapañca" for Prof. G. R. Malkani Essay Competition *no received essay deserved to be awarded first or second prize.*

The Head,  
Philosophy Department  
University of Poona, Ganeshkhind,  
Pune-411 007



July 1989

## BOOK - REVIEWS

*Choose Life, A Dialogue*, Arnold Toynbee and Daisaku Ikeda, (Ed.) Richard L. Gage, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1987 (Being the Commonwealth edition of the *Toynbee-Ikeda Dialogue* :

*Man Himself Must Choose*, first published in 1976 by Kodansha International Ltd., Tokyo, Newyork & San Francisco).

&

*Humanity at the Crossroads : An Inter-cultural Dialogue*, Karan Singh & Daisaku Ikeda, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1988.

Edited by Richard L. Gage, *Choose Life* is a Dialogue between late Arnold Toynbee, the celebrated historian-philosopher and Daisaku Ikeda, the President of Soka Gakkai, the largest Buddhist lay organization in Japan, held during the years 1971 and 1974, and is inspired by a common concern, i.e., the future of Man under the impact of modern technological civilization which, without a corresponding increase in ethical performance and moral culture, poses a grave challenge to the very survival of the human race. Man's technological prowess versus his moral immaturity, which further threatens the dignity of man and nature and endangers human survival, is the central theme of the Dialogue. The theme is further amplified by a critical evaluation of the impact of technological civilization on the individual, social, political as well as religious life of Man. Present Dialogue between Toynbee and Ikeda, a Western Christian and an East



Asian Buddhist, can be considered as a global plea to Man in the nuclear age to Choose Life by opting a course of balanced development of scientific and spiritual culture,

Dialogue is initiated with concern over the Personal and Social Life of Man, who, inspite of sharing physiological functions with non-human fellow animals, is a self-conscious spiritual being, a distinction which invests man with a sense of 'dignity' in managing his personal as well as social affairs. Man's concern for 'dignity' is the basic cord which runs throughout the work, surfaces at key points, and ultimately emerges in the concluding portion of the work (pp. 339-342) as the Highest Human value which is absolute and universal. In the discussion of issues concerning the Individual, like heredity and environment, mind, body, sub-conscious etc. or on Social issues like Environment, Intellect, Health etc. the participants initially present their basic approach towards an issue of perennial importance, its status or scope under various traditions including modern approaches, discuss the contemporary problems associated with the phenomenon which may be direct result of the progress in technology, and present possible solutions. Since this methodology provides a key to understanding various social, political or philosophical issues which otherwise apparently seem unrelated, it may be illustrated by giving one example relating to Environment.

The basic issue of relationship between Man and Nature, presently termed 'Environment' opens with Ikeda's elaboration of the term *Esho Funi* or the Buddhist concept of the oneness of Man and Nature or the unity of the subject and environment in cosmic life-force, its attestation by Toynbee in the Weltanschauung of the pre-Christian Greco-Roman world, its total violation under Judaic monotheism according to which God placed the whole of his non-human creation at the disposal of man (vide p. 39), glorification of Nature by Jesus and reco-



*Book Reviews*

gnition of kinship between man and nature, animate or inanimate, by the Western Christian saint like Francis of Assisi. Recounting the early stages on man's total dependence on nature, the participants examine the issue of man's ultimate mastery over environment because of the advancement of scientific technology, which in turn leads to the discussion of contemporary problems and issues, such as natural and man-made disasters, urban problems of landprices, transportation, environmental pollution, and spells a word of caution to avoid the imminent doom which would be the fate of man if the over-exploitation of the bounties of nature is not controlled.

The process outlined above allows the participants to voice their respective positions, clear differences and arrive at a consensus, where possible. In case of social issues like assisting the aged, mass media and freedom of press or moral justification for abolition of Death Penalty, Toynabee and Ikeda reach a consensus, while in case of Suicide and Euthanasia, both unfold their respective positions. According to Toynbee 'suicide and euthanasia are fundamental and indispensable human rights' and 'human dignity is violated when a human being is kept alive against his will' (p. 156). Ikeda, as a Buddhist, firmly believes that, 'decision of when to end life ought to be left to the life force itself' and that 'termination of life is determined at a level beyond human consciousness and is unrelated to intellect or emotion' (p. 157).

The impact of worldwide network of technological and economic relations established during the last five hundred years on the political systems and international issues is critically examined by the two participants which leads to a logical deduction that the unification of the world on technological and civilizational



level (western) must ultimately result in the unification of the world on political and religious levels. Evaluating limitations of the present political systems and powers backed by the strength of technology with its resultant greed and pride, the two main accomplices of the technological culture, as displayed by events like bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Toynbee and Ikeda expect the emergence of a new political and religious systems capable of unifying the world politically and spiritually. "In a future voluntary unification of mankind on a global scale", as Toynbee believes, "an important part is likely to be played by the world-wide spread of some kind of common religion" the basic precept of which will be 'self-mastery' by man. Self-mastery alone, and not material enrichment because of advances in Science and technology, would lead to controlling greed, pride and aggressiveness resulting in two-fold objectives of abolition of war and the restraint of aggressive competitiveness in near future and ultimately in restoration of full human Dignity which is the highest human value.

Dealing with varied issues of contemporary importance as well as perennial nature evaluated by the keen eye of a historian, who not only looks into the past but the future as well, and presented in a mature logical manner *Choose Life* is a document which depicts Man's vulnerable situation under the growing power of scientific technology till he decides his own role and becomes the master of the situation he has created for himself. Wide range of issues have been discussed each of which is complete in itself and yet is as much a part of the holistic conception of Toynbee of which the entire creation is an integral part. The work needs to be studied by every concerned human being to understand what is at stake if Man, by mistake or otherwise, does not opt to Choose Life.



*Book Reviews*

*Humanity At Crossroads : An Inter-Cultural Dialogue*, is a published version of the oral discussion between Karan Singh and Daisaku Ikeda during the years 1979-80 and is based on a common concern over the crises of modern civilization which has made astonishing advances in technology and acquired vast power, but has not progressed in moral and spiritual dimension. The Dialogue explores the rich spiritual culture of the Orient with reference to Hinduism and Buddhism and aims to evaluate its possible contribution for the welfare of humanity in the East and the West by developing a global consciousness.

The Dialogue, in its written form, has been arranged in five chapters of which the first two concentrate on Vedic religion and development of Upanishadic Philosophy which served as a background for the rise of Buddhism and is a source for Hinduism. The next two chapters deal with the rise and fall of Buddhism in India and its impact on Indian society along with the spread of Buddhism outside India. In the concluding chapter the participants evaluate the potential of the rich tradition of the Orient in enriching the quality of human life by suggesting practical solutions to the problems of the present day world. Under the broad framework, mentioned above, the issues examined are twofold in nature : (1) historical descriptions of a particular issue or event, such as Links between the Indus Valley and Vedic Civilization, Early Aryan Society and Vedic Religion or the Date of the Buddha, Buddhism in Kashmir etc., and (2) discussions on fundamental principles, precepts or values and their respective role under a particular tradition which may play a positive role for the welfare of humanity. While historical descriptions have their own place and sometimes original interpretations have been offered by the participants with regard to a particular issue, it is the search for common values and principles which is the primary aim of the Dialogue and should be the focus for present purposes.



The participants' deep understanding of their respective tradition is reflected in their discussions on the basic concepts and their practical applications in the modern context. Thus, as a follower of the Buddhism preached by Nichiren Daishonin (1222-82 A. D.) in Japan, Daisaku Ikeda's positive approach towards solving the problems of life is based on the altruism of Mahayana Buddhism which according to him 'represents to perfection the true spirit of the Gautama Buddha' and believes in the 'principle of converting delusion into the attitudes and actions of the Bodhisattva and of turning the suffering of life and death into the enlightenment of Nirvana'. Further, the ultimate height of the spirit of the Mahayana teachings is considered to be represented by the Lotus Sutra which is taken to contain the essence of all Buddhism and forms the basis for Ikeda's conceptions. Karan Singh's forceful interpretations of the Hindu View of life are based not only on Vedic or Upanishadic philosophy, but on the combined strength of all sources of Hinduism which also includes in its fold all forms of Buddhism. It follows the Hindu tradition according to which Divinity pervades every atom of the universe and is, in ultimate analysis, 'seated within each individual'—a concept which endows spiritual dignity to every individual and needs to be advocated in present times.

Of greater interest are the issues where Ikeda and Karan Singh compare and contrast Hinduism and Buddhism, or trace parallels between the two. For example, Ikeda's view that Buddhism is born of an awareness of the limitations of Upanishadic thought which is more speculative than practical, considers truth as an external goal and could not become a part of the life of masses (vide p. 29) is aptly refuted by Karan Singh on all grounds except the fact that the Upanishadic seers sought only to lead their direct pupils to enlightenment, while the Buddha sought



enlightenment for all. Theory of Karma, Transmigration, enlightenment of a human being while still living on earth and salvation, i.e., Nirvana or Moksha etc. are common principles amongst the two. Karan Singh, however, is critical of the Buddhist conception of Soul and believes that a clear and unequivocal statement as given in the Bhagvadgita, is a more satisfying position to take.

Interesting parallels can also be traced between the Ramarajya of Rama and Dharmarajya of Asoka, the dialogue of Milinda and Nagasena and of Janaka and Yajnavalkya. From philosophical point of view the amazing description of Assembly in Space in the Lotus Sutra may be compared with the Vishvaropadarshana in the Bhagavadgita. Similar parallels can further be traced between Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism and a working framework combining the precepts of the two can be evolved for better understanding, peaceful coexistence and for the welfare of humanity at large.

While a dialogue between Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism, such as the one initiated here, seems to be promising, more stringent efforts would be required to bridge the gap and come to some understanding between the other Buddhist sects, i.e., Hinayana and Vajrayana towards which negative attitude is indicated in the discussion by Ikeda. Similarly, present arrangement of the work on historical lines leads to historical descriptions of issues and events which sometimes overshadow the discussion on basic human principles on which foundations for mutual understanding are to be based. Perhaps, division of the work on the basis of 'Concepts' would have been a more satisfying arrangement. Despite these minor issues, the very attempt on intercultural dialogue by Karan Singh and Ikeda is an appreciable venture and the two have succeeded in their basic aim of 'stimu-



lating greater awareness of the spiritual culture of the Orient,  
which can fruitfully contribute to the welfare of modern humanity.

Department of History  
University of Jammu  
Jammu Tawi - 180001  
(J. & K.)

MADHU SEN



BOOKS RECEIVED

- Bhat, Govardhan P ; *The Basic Ways of Knowing*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, Second Edition, 1989; pp. xxvii+437; HC, Rs. 175/-.
- Marres, René; *In Defence of Mentalism : A Critical Review of the Philosophy of Mind*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, Second Edition, 1989; pp. 250; SC; Dfl. 39-50.
- Pandit, M. P.; *Traditions in Sādhana : Studies in Tantra, Veda, Yoga, Philosophy and Mysticism*. Sterling Publishing Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1988; pp. xiv + 289, HC, Rs. 175/-.
- Radhakrishnan, S ; *Essentials of Psychology*, Oxford, Delhi, second impression, 1988; pp. xii + 78; HC, Rs. 100/-.
- Saxena, Sushil Kumar; *Ever Unto God : Essays on Gandhi, and Religion*, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi, 1988, pp. xii + 228; HC, Rs. 110/-.



271. Dr. P. G. Gopinathan Pillai  
Physician, Pushpagiri Hospital,  
TIRUVALLA 689 101  
( Kerala ).

272. Fr. Paul Mudathotty,  
Ruhahaya, P. B. No. 4,  
UJJAIN 456 006  
( M. P. ).

273. Dr. Dilip Kumar Mohanta,  
C/o Avinash Paul,  
Netaji Road, Alipurduar  
Dist. Jalpaiguri 725 121.



October 1989

## AFRICAN COSMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY

I shall attempt in this paper to expose and analyse the ancient African Ontology and Cosmology. It is not a critique as such but an exposition. I intend to analyse African myths about God as well as the concepts of myth. Finally I shall examine the relationship between African cosmology and the unified field theory.

A discussion on African cosmology and ontology will invariably border on an aspect of the totality of African Culture or philosophy. The Chambers's twentieth century Dictionary defines Cosmology as 'the Science of the universe as a whole : a treatise on the structure and part of the system of creation'<sup>1</sup> The same dictionary defines ontology as "the Science that treats of the principles of metaphysics...the nature and essence of things".<sup>2</sup> Ontology is a central part of metaphysic. It borders on questions like : "Does anything exist necessarily? Is it necessary that something, no matter what, should exist?"<sup>3</sup> It is concerned with the existence of material objects, minds, persons, universals, numbers, facts and so on. The question of the existence of God, the Supreme deity, has over the years bordered on ontology and cosmology. The cosmological argument for the existence of God is the one that argues from the nature of the cosmos or universe. In the history of western philosophy, cosmological argument for the existence of God is believed to have originated with Aristotle. The ontological argument for the existence of a Supreme deity was a pre-dominant intellectual

Received : 27-10-88



question in a whole spectrum of ancient Greek philosophy. It argues that God exists necessarily. When Xenophanes, in ancient Greek period, was mentioning God, he was referring to Him as a necessary being. And the Supreme deity in Socrates' world of forms called 'Demiurge' is a necessary being. In medieval European period, some great thinkers like St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine and St. Anselm devoted greater part of their intellectual activity to proving the existence of God ontologically. It seems that the first intellectual and philosophical preoccupation of man on earth was to wonder and cogitate on why and how he came to the universe; how and why there exists the universe; how the universe will probably come to an end; and who was probably the author of all existence. It was not only the Greek philosophers, as recorded history tells us, that bothered themselves with these questions. People of other races in ancient times approached these issues in consonance with their cultures. The African medicinemen, Herbalists, Priests, diviners, hunters, warriors and so on were preoccupied with these questions especially when trying to improve on their vocations. They had always found answers to these questions, for they were not agnostics. They believed that without spiritual guidance, their work and tools would come to naught.

To besmirch African cosmology and ontology and to hoodwink inquiring minds from understanding the people of Africa, some writers and scholars have derogatively described African religious practises, ceremonies, feasts and festivals as paganistic, Heathenistic, Idolatrous and Animistic. Paganism and Heathenism are sociological terms which are unfit to apply to Africa. A 'pagan' is somebody who lives in a village. But it is not only the Africans that live in villages. Although ironically, village has been used derogatively to describe Africans' homes in the country side. 'Heath' means a dirty place or a dump



Hill where vagabonds or out-lawed live. Africa is likened to this, so they described their religion as a heathen religion. The other term 'Idolatry' is derived from Idol. An Idol means a toy or an image. When the whiteman came they saw a lot of images and thought that Africans worship those images. But to Africans these are meant for concentration. Animism means the belief in the existence of spirits. The term Animism "can be applied to Igbo philosophy and Religion and Africa at large, not because they worship or revere empty objects, but because they believed that behind every human being or object there is a vital power or soul".<sup>4</sup> Africans personify nature because they believe that there is a spiritual force residing in every object of nature. This is why the African religious practises, feasts and ceremonies cannot, in any way, be equated to magical and idotatrous practices or fetishism.

Whatever may be the origin or culture of a people, it would be sheer dishonesty and prejudice to deny their philosophy. According to Geoffrey Parrinder, "To say that African people have no system of thought, explicit or assumed, would be to deny their humanity...".<sup>5</sup> Religion permeates every aspect of the lives of the Igbos. No wonder why Parrinder observes that "the Africans were incurably religious people".<sup>6</sup>

### *Ontology*

African ontology, according to J. S. Mibiti, is religious one. It is anthropocentric ontology in the sense that everything is seen in terms of its relation to man. Africans believe that everything that exist is a force and that none of them exists in Isolation. These forces are interrelated. "From the beginning of the world, it is assumed, there has existed a life-force, created by one God which is always active, spread throughout the universe, dispensed to all animate life-forces, man, animals and



plants, sometimes communicated to things which we consider inanimate".<sup>7</sup> Father Tempels calls this life-force 'Vital force', while Edwin Smith calls it dynamism. Dynamism means "The belief in, and the practices associated with the belief in hidden, mysterious, supersensible, pervading energy, powers, potent forces".<sup>8</sup> I would call this force the "Spiritual essence". Whether it is called 'Vital force' 'dynamism' or 'spiritual essence' it means the same thing. In some parts of West-Africa the Europeans have translated the word 'Nyama' to mean energy, power, vital forces, or spiritual essence. "Nyama is often conceived of as impersonal, unconscious energy, found in man, animals, gods nature and things".<sup>10</sup> Medicine-men have a tendency to recognise the inner quality or power which is enshrined in a root or leaf of a tree. Medicine-men, wood carvers, blacksmiths, hunters, orators, priests and chiefs are believed to possess this power in some special degrees.

God is the Great life-force which informs and controls other life-forces. A life-force, according to K. C. Anyanwu, is possessed by a whole pantheon or mythical forces (ancestors, water spirits, divinities) that are bound up with the everyday life of the Africans. "God, divinities, ancestors, men, animals, plants, words, knowledge etc., are life-forces, though each possesses certain characteristics peculiar to its nature than the other of hierarchy".<sup>11</sup> The Supreme being is above all other forces. He is often considered to be so remote that men do not pray to him directly always. But in times of distress many Africans turn to Him directly. His is the final arbiter. "The power of God is Supreme; all flows from him and inheres in him; God-lings and ancestors are intermediaries; prayers are offerings made to them which may be passed on to the sources of all".<sup>12</sup> According to John S. Mibiti, God is the ultimate explanation of the genesis and sustenance of both man and all things.



According to Parrinder, God is the originator and sustainer of man; the spirits explain the destiny of man. Man is the centre of this ontology; the Animals, Plants, and natural Phenomena and objects constitute the environment in which man lives, provide a means of existence and if need be, man establishes a mystical relationship with them.

There is need for a harmonious relations between God, Spirits, Man, Animals, Plants, phenomena and objects without biological life. A destruction of one of the categories will alter the cosmic balance and destroy the whole This is the root of African wholism or political philosophy (communalism).

In addition to the five categories there is a force, power or energy permeating the universe. God is believed to be the source and ultimate controller of this force. Spirits also have access to some of the powers. Some human beings have the knowledge and ability to tap, manipulate and use it. Such people are the medicine-men, preists, reinmakers and so on. Some use it for the good of the community, while some others use it in bad faith.

Ontologically speaking, Africans have no doubt about the reality of space and time In Africa, especially in Bantu thought, space is used to locate existents and time is used to measure duration. Generally speaking, Africans also believe in what Alexis Kagame calls modal beings. According to him, these are entities which, by their nature, are incapable of independent existence but, like quantity and quality, have to be attached to substantive-beings or which consist essentially in relationship between two beings (relation, possession, position etc.). In Africa, evil does not seem to have a substantive existence. It might, therefore, belong to this category of beings in African ontology.



In some parts of Africa there is the belief in great pantheon of gods which resembles the Greek, Egyptian, Roman and Hindu pantheon of gods. "Many of these gods are the expressions of the forces of nature, which men fear or try to propitiate".<sup>13</sup> These gods have temples and priests.

All Africans believe in the cult of Ancestral spirits and Reincarnation. In African thought both concepts are logically and necessarily tied together. Ancestorship arose out of the people's belief in reincarnation. In western philosophy, the duality of man was emphasised in the work of Plato, Manichaens, Rene Descartes and so on. Here, man is believed to be of composite nature, that of having body (physical) and soul (spiritual). In African thought too, a human being is believed to be dual. It is duality of man that gave rise to the idea of life after death. In all African myths of creation, it is believed that the Supreme intelligence imparts some parts of himself to man. And this is the spiritual essence or the soul. The idea is that at death the physical body returns to earth while the spiritual essence survives the physical body and continues to live on. Africans, therefore, do not doubt the existence of life after death. People claim to have seen their beloved ones who had died sometime ago either while in dream state or in the state of trance. There are stories of people who fell into coma and who woke up to narrate their experiences in the spiritual realm. In Africa, some people claim to have seen their departed mothers or fathers. It is also believed that when a person dies, his spiritual essence visits the beloved ones in distant places and will hunt where they have worked and lived when they were alive. It is the above understanding, among others, that gave rise to the cult of ancestors. An ancestor is, therefore, somebody who lived on earth, died nobly and would have received the blessing of Supreme being, God. He should have left children



*African Cosmology and Ontology*

behind to remember him as ancestor. The ancestors are among the numerous powers in the Subterrenean world which men fear and propitiate before resorting to the Supreme intelligence, God

In every African society, the ancestors are regarded as the cohesive factor between their off-springs and other spiritual forces. The social life of very family hoves round the cult of the ancestor or the ancestral shrine. Some disputes within the family are settled before the spirits of ancestor. Before a daughter is sent out for marriage, rituals are performed within the ancestral shrine and a new wife brought into the family is incorporated into the fold with some ritual performed in the ancestral shrine. Ancestors are believed to be capable of protecting their off-springs. They are also believed to be capable of punishing the disobedient ones. They frown seriously against activities such as stealing, lying, poisoning which are capable of causing disharmony in the ontological coherence of the society. Ancestors protect good and innocent members of the society. They also punish the wicked ones.

In African thought, Ancestors are venerated with some rituals. Sometimes this veneration may amount to worship. But this kind of worship is not the same with the worship of God, the Supreme deity. Africans do not put ancestors and other spiritual forces on the same pedestal with God.

The relationship between all spiritual forces and God is represented by a triangle. According to Parriender, at the apex is the sky, which symbolizes the Supreme power from which all life flows and to whom all returns. The base represents the earth which is often personified as a goddess. The earth is very much revered in Africa as the producer of food and the burying place of his dead. One side of the triangle represents the



ancestors. Among ancestors are dead kings, and chiefs who are potent to help or harm. On the other side of the triangle are gods, or natural forces, "which must be propitiated lest they become angry at neglect and cause the seasons to fail".<sup>14</sup> In African philosophy, God is the highest ontological and necessary being.

### *Cosmogony*

Cosmogony is defined by Chambers's dictionary as 'a theory or a myth of the origin of the universe.' It is, therefore, part of a people's world view or cosmology.

A people's world-view influences their ethics, social organisations, arts, science and so on. T. U. Nwala writing on the philosophy of the Igbos of Nigeria says, "Igbo world view or cosmology consist of two basic beliefs, the Unity of all things and an ordered relationship among all beings in the universe".<sup>15</sup> Igbo world-view is also to the effect that gods and men live a symbiotic life, one of mutual and reciprocal relationship. Men feed the gods and the gods provide heath, fertility of soil and reproduction".<sup>16</sup>

The world view is the public aspect of the ancient African philosophy which, according to William Abrahm, should be distinguished from the private aspect in discussing African philosophy. The public can be said to possess simple "Knowledge which is regarded as only a begining in the understanding of beliefs and customs and some individual elders can be said to possess deep knowledge".<sup>17</sup> These individuals that possess deep knowledge are the Paul Radin autochthonous intellectual class (elders, diviners, priests, titled men and so on) who are continually establishing standards and reviewing existing ones.

Africans recognise and acknowledge the existence of a supreme being. There seems to be the belief that God is created from



nothing and at other times from an already existent primal matter. There are different versions of the myth of creation in different African communities. Among the Igbos of Nigeria, the NRI Corpus of tradition says that the founding father of this community ERI and his wife NAMAKU were sent down from Heaven by CHUKWU, the Igbo Supreme God. It is said that when ERI came down from the sky he sat on an ant-hill as the land was waterlogged. When ERI complained, CHUKWU (God) sent an Awka blacksmith with his bellows, fire and charcoal to dry up the land. "The Awka blacksmith came and performed his assignment. ERI and his people were fed by CHUKWU on substance from the back of the sky. During this period, men did not sleep. When the special food ceased to exist and after the death of ERI, his first son NRI made supplication to CHUKWU who ordered him to kill and bury in separate graves, his first son and first daughter. NRI complied with this order in consequence of which after three weeks yam grew from the grave of the son and cocoyam from that of the daughter. When NRI and his people ate these they slept for the first time".<sup>12</sup>

E. G. Parrinder has an encyclopedia of myths of creation collected from various parts of Africa in his book, *Africans' Three Religions*. These include myths from Mali, Yoruba of Nigeria, Ashanti of Ghana. The Dogon of Mali and upper delta believed that God called AMMA first created the sun and moon. The earth was made from a lump of clay which was thrown into space where it spread out like a body lying face upwards. God (AMMA) was said to be feeling loneliness and so sought union with the earth. He had to excise its coteries which was like a termite hill. This myth is used to justify female excision.<sup>13</sup>

Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, Olorun, owner of the sky lived in heaven with other divinities. Under the sky was a waste marsh without solid ground, where divinities sometimes came



down to play and hunt. According to Parrinder, God called a divine agent, ORISHANIA and gave him a snail shell filled with soil in pigeon and a hen, and sent them down below. When the soil was poured out on the marsh the birds scattered it about till earth was formed. The first place of the appearance of solid ground was called IFE which means 'Wide' (and this is the site of the town ILE-IFE, the most sacred city of Yoruba land). In Yoruba tradition, too, it is believed that God shared the work of making man with Orishania, leaving him to mould men out of clay but reserving the breathing of life into them to himself.

There are also some myths about the origin of man related by J. S. Moisi in his book, *African Religion and Philosophy*. Among the Ashanti of Ghana it is said that on one Monday night a worm made a hole up through the ground, and from it emerged seven men, some women, a leopard and a dog. These men were said to be afraid at the sight of the earth but their leader Adu Ogyinae, laid his hands on them and calmed them on Tuesday. But on Wednesday, he was killed by a falling tree when they were building huts. Then the dog went out to look for fire and they cooked food. Finally, they met God of creation and he took one of these people as his helper. Annual ceremonies are still held to commemorate these first people.

According to Zulu myth, the first man and woman came out of a reed and the Thonga of Mozambique say that a reed exploded and men emerged.

A malagasy myth says that God first made two men and a woman. One man carved a woman from wood and talked to it. The second man came across the image and covered it with clothes and jewels. Then the woman saw the image and took it to bed with her, so that it came to life and became a beautiful woman. Then the two men arrived and quarrelled over the two women.



*African Cosmology and Ontology*

God intervened and said that the first man was father of the girl and the woman its mother, so the second man should marry the girl. The first man and woman also married and the two couples are the parents of all mankind.

To most Africans, death is thought to be unnatural. It did not exist among men at the beginning but it was due to the fault of some Creatures like animal. Sometimes it is blamed on witches, sorcerers and black magicians. According to Parrinder in *Africans' Three Religions*, the Keno of Sierra-Leone say that God told the first man and woman that they would not die for he would give them new skin. He sent these in a bundle carried by a dog. The dog was said to have delayed on the way and foolishly told other animal what was in the bundle. The snake had knowledge of this and stole the bundle, sharing the skins with his relatives. So the snake changes its skin and does not die, but men die and try to kill snakes.

A Zuru story blames the chameleon for coming too slowly with the message that men would not die; for it stopped to eat fruit on the way. God sent the Lizard later with the message of death, he arrived first and men accepted its word before the chameleon came along.

In the land of Buganda the explanation of the arrival of death comes in the long stories of the first man, Kintu and his wife Nambi whom he fetched from heaven. When the married couple were returning to earth the king of heaven, Gulu, warned them not to go back for anything. But Nambi forgot grain for her fowls and returned to get some. Her brother, death, followed her and lived with the couple on earth. He asked for one of their children as cook and when they refused he killed it. Other children died and Kintu went up to heaven to complain. Gulu told him it was Nambi's fault but after some pleading he sent another



brother, Kaizuki to stop death killing the children. Kaizuki told everybody to stay at home while he hunted for death, but some children went out with their goats and death has lived on earth since then killing whom he can and hiding in the ground.

Africans believe that the almighty is in a distant sky and could not be approached directly. Antiquated views about African conception of God have, because of this, held that African God is a remote one and uncertain. This is not true. God, though has retired to a distant place, is a reality in African society and is certain. Various myths in Africa tell us that God once lived among the people until man, I suppose, misused his free-will.

In Igbo community of Nigeria, it is believed that God (CHUKWU) once lived with the people. But while a woman and her children were cooking, she had a dirty hand which she inadvertently cleaned on the sky wall. God was said to be annoyed and so retired to a distant place. The multi-coloured nature of the sky today is seen as the reflection of the dirty hand of the woman.<sup>20</sup> There is a similar story among the Mende of Sierra-Leone related by Parrinder in his book *African Traditional Religion*. The Mende people say that God once lived in a cave and invited the animals to come in pairs but forbade them to touch his food. Unfortunately, the cow smelt the sweet smelling food and ate some. Immediately God siezed the animal and threw it out of the cave. All the animals including man sinned and suffered the same fate. So while animal and man wander about searching food, God watches them from above. The Ngombe of Congo, according to Parridder, say that men used to live in the sky, but one woman became such a nuisance that God lowered her down from heaven in a basket with enough seed for herself and her children.



In discussing the activity of God in the African world, we cannot allow our memory escape us with the fact that the idea of reincarnation is very vital to African world-view and that it could not have been possible without God as the highest force and controller of all forces. The idea of reincarnation is common to many religions including African Religions, Hindus, Buddhism and Jainism. But there are subtle differences among their various conceptions of reincarnation. The idea of punishment in hell and reward in heaven in Christianity and the idea of rebirth into a higher or lower state in Plato and Indian belief are missing in African thought. The Indian attitude is world-denying while African attitude is world-affirming. In Africa, "It is, therefore, a punishment to be detained in Hades and childlessness is a curse because it blocks the channel of rebirth. All the dead return to the earth, except perhaps certain ghosts that have been captured by Sorcerers"<sup>21</sup>. The belief in reincarnation is, therefore, very prominent in Africa. It is believed in some areas that the number of souls created by God is limited. These souls continuously reincarnate into subsequent generation after they must have left the earth, except perhaps some of them have been captured by Sorcerers or black-magicians. The rebirth of souls accounts for the family resemblances in African families. In isolated cases, a father can reincarnate into his grand child while alive. In that circumstance, the father should not see the new child till his death. This is because, according to Igbo tradition of Nigeria, if the father sees the child, the child will die and the grand-father will continue to live.

In African idea of reincarnation, the soul or spirit of a departed one can reincarnate into more than one entities or children. It does not seem to me that there is any logical or conceptual difficulty here. The spirit of an ancestor can manifest itself in



more than one child. This is perhaps because just as God, the Supreme deity, manifests himself through Spirits, gods and divinities, the ancestral spirit, a Superior being to man, can influence more than one child. "The reborn soul may be that of a paternal or maternal relative, according to the system of patrilineal or matrilineal inheritances in force in the clan. Great efforts are devoted to marriage arrangement to ensure that there is proper affinity, so that tradition may be followed and the ancestors reborn" <sup>22</sup>.

It is very pertinent to understand the difference between reincarnation and transmigration or metempsychosis in African thought. Transmigration or metempsychosis means a possible change into animal form. Some communities believe that after death, some people can transmigrate into beasts, leopards, pythons and so on. That is why some of these animals are treated with honour whenever they are found dead. But the most popular belief about transmigration in Africans is that it is in the wicked power of the so-called sorcerers and black magicians to assume the shape of an animal. So transmigration is far from the concept of reincarnation. In the cluster of forces involved in reincarnation, God is the greatest and controller of all of them.

### *Myth And Science*

Attempt shall be made to elucidate, to a reasonable extent, the term myth. A culture that currently believes in myth is swiftly dismissed as still primitive. Myth is regarded as a mode of thought of antiquity and pre-logical people. Ancient African thought and the thought of ancient people of Egypt, Sumeria, Greek Romans were drenched with mythology. If this mode of thought was peculiar to early civilizations, what is its significance? Is African mythology of any social or religious value to the communities? Philosophy and science are believed to be a more



advanced and rational mode of thought than myth. Can man live and comprehend the universe without falling back on myth? Is philosophy or science completely devoid of any iota of mythological element. Africa was not the only race that wallowed and lived on myth as we have observed above. There may be wisdom in the myths of ancient African people especially with regard to the Supreme being.

Let us start to examine the concept of myth from dictionary point of view. According to Chambers's 20th century dictionary, myth "is an ancient traditional story of gods or heroes, especially, one offering an explanation of some fact or phenomenon: a story with a veiled meaning: mythical matter: a figment: a commonly-held belief that is untrue, or without foundation" <sup>22</sup>. This dictionary definition of myth is replete with controversial propositions. Some anthropologists and philosophers would not agree with the dictionary contention that myth only relates the ancient story of gods and heroes. The function of myth goes beyond that. Some believe that it concerns legends, folktales and stories of past events, not necessarily with regard to gods and heroes. In fairness to the dictionary it could be a mythical matter, a figment, an unconsciously held belief but which renders explanation of social consciousness. But that does not mean that it is untrue or lacks foundation. Even if it is dream like, yet some dreams are reflections or replay of man's experiences in his daily life. The mythical divinity or god, SHANGO in Yoruba land in Africa, was a mortal being who lived a life of extra-ordinary dimension. He is believed to have caused fire that burnt him and his family among other things. He was thereafter elevated to the status of a god with stories about his life narrated and handed down from generation with mythical tones. In short, he was a historical figure which later became a mythical figure. With this, can one say that the myth surrounding the god, SHANGO lacks founda-



born. In the myth these conflicts are reconciled. Therefore, the function of myth is to render intellectually and socially intelligible and acceptable what would otherwise be incoherent. For example, the marxist ideal society can be described as myth not only because it seems impracticable but also because it appears to reconcile the binary conflicts in capitalist world. In the African world, the vertical or hierarchical order in the society finds transcendental justification in world of spirits, forces, gods and God (the supreme being). Therefore in African world of mortal individuals, opposition to the hierarchical order is divinely unjustified. Conflicts arising therefrom have been reconciled in the divine realm.

The subject-matter of mythological narratives is not totally different from that of philosophy and science. The difference is that myth is neither true nor false. According to Alasdair MacIntyre, "myth is living or dead, not true or false. You cannot refute a myth because as soon you treat it as refutable you do not treat it as a myth but as a hypothesis or history"<sup>27</sup>. But it is undeniably obvious that a systematised or empirical mode of thought, philosophy and science is preferred to mythological understanding of issues. According to W.K.C. Guthrie "the birth of philosophy in Europe, then consisted in the abandonment, at the level of conscious thought, of mythological solutions to problems concerning the origin and nature of the universe and the processes that go on within it. For religious faith there is substituted the faith that was and remains the basis of scientific thought... that the visible world conceals a rational and intelligible order"<sup>28</sup>.

Philosophy and science was born in the Greek world around sixth century. Philosophers then were anxious to substitute an antiquated and dogmatic mode of thought, mythological explanations, for a more systematised undogmatic system called philo-



sophy and science. They, therefore, became critical of ancient Greek mythologies and religions. Xenophanes rationally criticised myth as anthropomorphically representing the gods. Euhemerus argued that myths were to be explained as stories about men who had been deified. Socrates and Plato did not hesitate in criticizing the old mythological religions and their gods. But ironically, Plato's *Republic* was punctuated with mythological elements. In the *Republic*, Frutiger draws a distinction between myth as allegories, as genetic explanation and as parascientific explanation. Myth as allegories is the Diotima account of the birth of Eros in symposium<sup>9</sup>. Genetic explanation is the account of the creation in Timeaus while parascientific explanations are the account of a future life and the rewards and punishment for virtue and vice give in the *Republic*, *Georgias*, *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*. Like Plato, modern thinkers and scientists could not avoid depending on myths in their attempts to solve some natural puzzles. The persons of some great avatars like Jesus Christ and Mohammed were built around myths. Even in the *Bible* and *Koran*, certain stories remained resonable only at the level of myths. Among the present day scientific feats, the Albert Eistein's theory of relativity and unified field theory can only be understood if and only if some propositions are regarded as self-evident that is, viewing them as myths. Human beings may not entirely do without myths.

All the myths of creation, about God and belief in reincarnation may not be subject to Scientific verification. But they are as old as the tradition of the people. David Hume and his likes in western philosophy would definitely not subscribe to the myths because they could not have been experienced. David Hume once challenged the view that a Supreme deity was responsible for the creation of the universe. He says, "Can you pretend to show any such similarity between the fabric of a house and



the generation of a universe? Have you ever seen nature in any situation as resembles the first arrangement of the elements? Have worlds ever been formed under your eye, and have you had leisure to observe the whole progress of the phenomenon from the first appearance of order to its final consummation. If you have, then cite your experience and deliver your theory" <sup>30</sup>. David Hume could be right only to the extent that these myths may not be subject to empirical investigation. But it is not everything or every truth that is experienced. In science, there are certain truths that cannot be verified. Take, for example, atoms, electrons and neutrons are elements that cannot be physically demonstrated. Yet, we employ them as working tools in science and technology.

Among the Igbos of Nigeria and perhaps Africans in general, myths have been vehicle for conveying certain theological lessons and truths. It conserves the people's traditions and beliefs. It is a reservoir of knowledge. In the absence of written literature oral tradition may not be functional without myths, legends, proverbs and so on. It seems to me that myth is the hall-mark or an important face in the earliest civilization. The Egyptians and the Greeks used myths to recall their traditions and legendary events and personalities or gods.

The various myths about God in Africa, for one thing, show that Africans believe in and acknowledge the substantive existence of God. The myths tend to tell us that African God is a loving one. He loves His people. He was like a father to them and He once lived with them. To the Africans, existence is a necessary and essential attribute of God. Critically speaking, the myths about creation and why God ceased to exist among the people tend to portray African God as an emotional God. And the idea of Him as a father who can be offended tends to show that African conception of God is anthropomorphic. However, to the



extent that behind every object or being in the universe, there is a force or power which is accountable to and are manifestation of God, the highest power, African world-view can be said to be panpsychic. It does not seem to me there is any difficulty or contradiction in African conception of God being immanent and anthropomorphic.

It is clear from the foregoing that ancient African Cosmologists attributed nature or the universe to the ingenuity of the Supreme being, God. As we have seen, African world is a spiritual universe and her cosmology may be unscientific. It could be recalled that the Greek philosopher Thales considered water to be the fundamental element of the universe. In other words, everything is explainable in terms of water. His contemporary, Pythagoras, thought the cosmos is reducible to a few integral numbers. Anaximander of Miletus, an associate of Thales, said that the material cause and first element of things was the infinite from which arose all the heavens and the world within them. Anaximenes, of the school of Miletus, argued that the fundamental element of the universe is Air. Xenophanes said the God was responsible for Creation. Heraclitus argued that every thing was in a flux, that is everything was continuously changing.

This search for the fundamental elements in the universe has continued to agitate and inspire scientists for many years now. Today they are focusing attention not so much on particles of matter as on four forces : "gravity, electromagnetism, the weak nuclear interaction and the strong nuclear interaction".<sup>31</sup> It seems to the scientists that these forces derive from the same fundamental principle called the "Unified field theory".<sup>32</sup> Albert Einstein, a German philosopher and Scientist, grappled with the problem of establishing this theory conclusively for thirty years and failed. But the search for the unified field theory did not end with Ensteins death in 1955. His colleagues and fellow



scientists and philosophers have been optimistic as ever in their search for this theory.

For the purpose of our study, that is, African cosmology in relation to the unified field theory, we shall focus attention on the four forces for which explanation is being sought in terms of the unified field. Firstly, the gravity, which pulls every object to the ground. Secondly, the Electromagnetism that sparks lightening. Thirdly, the weak force that causes radioactivity and fourthly, the strong force that holds atomic nuclei together. The Unified field is hopefully expected here to be a unifying force of these four forces. Before the advent of this theory, Einstein had paved the way for the big-bang theory for explaining the four main forces after the big-bang. According to the big-bang theory, "A fire ball of pure energy exploded cooling as it spread outward...".<sup>53</sup> The creation started from these and the universe expands. But what bothers Einstein and other scientists is whether the universe will continue to expand or whether it will contract later.

At this point, an incisive and inquiring mind will begin to see the similarities and differences between African cosmology, ancient Greek cosmology and contemporary Scientific cosmology. To a large extent, African world is Spiritual and is accountable to the ultimate Spiritual being. It has much in common with the views of Xenophanes, Socrates and others in ancient Greece. Thales, Haraclitus and Pythagoras seem to be more scientific in their postulations.

The big-bang theory failed to account for what was responsible for the big-bang. Ancient African cosmologists would say it was God who was responsible for everything including the big-bang. I believe that the concept of the Unified Field Theory is the concept of African cosmology in scientific language.



Africans, as we have seen earlier, believe in diverse forces and powers. And these powers are often personified as gods and divinities. And the Supreme force is the Supremé being, God. The Igbos of Nigeria call Him CHUKWU, the Yoruba of Nigeria call Him OLORUN, the Mende of Sierra-Leone call Him Ngewo and the Ashanti of Ghana call Him NYAME. With regard to the Unified Field Theory, the African thought would personify the force of gravity as the 'god of gravity'; the force of electromagnetism as the god of lightening (for example, the Amadioha in Igbo land and Shango in Yoruba land); the weak force as the god of radioactivity and the strong force as the god of atomic nuclei. Ultimately, the Supreme force or deity will be the unified field force. The relationship which I have tried to establish between African ontology and the unified field tells us why in African thought, scientific and mechanical endeavours have spiritual causes and explanation

### *Conclusion*

African ontology and cosmology is panpsychic. Everything that exists has a spiritual cause. And these spiritual causes are ultimately manifestations and servants of God. The Unified Field Theory too, is panpsychic. It has been observed that when western science talks of forces, Africans prefer to talk of spirits and gods. On this score, do we talk of African Spiritualism or science? It seems that science and spiritualism overlap in African culture. Anything you might call scientific feat in African culture must invariably have a spiritual under-pinning.

Department of Religious History

Faculty of Humanities

Lagos State University

OJO, P. M. B. 1087

APAPA, LAGOS (Nigeria)

MADUABU DUKOR



## NOTES

1. *Chambers's, 20th Century Dictionary*, ed. E. M. Kirkpatrick (Britain, Richard Clay Ltd. 1983 ), p. 283.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 885.
3. A. R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, ( London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1986 ), p. 128.
4. DUKOR, M. 'The Concept of God in Igbo Philosophy' in *The Substance of African Philosophy*, ed. C. S. Momoh ( forthcoming ).
5. Parrinder, Geoffrey *Africans' Three Religions*, ( London, Sheldon Press 1969 ), p. 25.
6. Parrinder, Geoffrey. *African Traditional Religion*, ( London, Sheldon Press 1974 ). p. 9,
7. Anyanwu, K. C., 'Presuppositions of African Socialism' in *The Nigerian Journal of Philosophy*, University of Lagos Vol 3, No. 1 & 2, 1983 p. 60
8. Parrinder, Geoffrey; *African Traditional Religion*, *op. cit.* note 6, p. 2.
9. The 'Vital force' or the dynamism of man suggests the duality and the composite nature of man. One aspect of man is the physical or the body while the other is the vital force or dynamism, which is spiritual in nature and which many people believe to continue to exist after the physical body. This spiritual or ontological aspect of man is what I would rather regard as the Essence of man. It is the life of man. Because it is spiritual in nature I would call it the spiritual Essence.
10. Parrinder, G. E. ; *op. cit.* note 6, p. 22.
11. Anyanwu, K. C. ; *op. cit.* note 7, p. 50.
12. Parrinder, G. E. ; *op. cit.*, p. 24.
13. Parrinder, G. E. ; *Ibid.*, p. 25.
14. Parrinder, G. E. ; *Ibid.*, p. 25.
15. T. U. Nwala; *Igbo Philosophy*, ( Lagos, Uteramed Publications Nig. Ltd. 1985 ) p. 26.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
17. C. S. Momoh, 'African Philosophy : Does it Exist ?' Diogenes, 1985 p. 65.
18. Afigbo Adiele, *op. cit.*, p. 37. Adiele has discussed extensively the origin and culture of Igbo people.
19. Parrinder, G. E. ; *Africans' Three Religions*, *op. cit.* note 5, p. 29.
20. DUKOR, M., *op. cit.*



21. Parrinder, G. ; *African Traditional Religion*, *op. cit.*, note 8. p. 138.
22. *Ibid* , p. 139.
23. *Chambers's 20th Century Dictionary*, ed. E. M. Kirkpatrick ( Britain, Wand R Chambers 1983 ), p. 839.
24. E. R. Leach quoted by G. S. Kirk, *Myth : its Meaning and Funtions in Ancient and other Cultures* ( London, Cambridge University Press, 1970 ). p. 23.
25. G. S. Kirk, *Ibid*, pp. 29-30.
26. Alasdair MacIntyre ' Myth ' in *Encyclopedia of philosophy*, Vol. 5 & 6 ( New York, Macmillam Pub. Co. 1967 ).
27. *Ibid*. p. 435.
28. W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* ( Cambridge, 1962 ), p. 29.
29. Diotima is an imaginary person engaging Socrates in a discussion about love. Eros is the desire or love for good. Love is a half-way between mortal and immortal. It is an intermediari between men and gods. It is a great spirit among other spirits. According to Diotima, on the day Aphrodite was born, among the gods present was 'contrivance', the son of invention. In the course of the feasting, poverty came to be substituted to be for food. Contrivance became drunk and went into the garden of Zeus where he was overcome by sleep. Poverty, in order to improve her wretched condition, went and lay with him and conceived love. Because love was begotten on Aphrodite birth-day and because he liked beautiful things like Aphrodite he became her follower and servant. Love, therefore, bears the Chracter of his father, poverty, and his mother, contrivance. He is, therefore, poor like his mother poverty. And being his father's son, he always wants to get what is beautiful and good. He is bold. He yearns after knowledge and he is a lover of wisdom.

For details see *Plato, the Symposium* ed. Betty Paidice ( Penguin Books 1911 ), pp. 81-82. It is interesting to note here that most African Myths like the account of the withdrawal of God from man are of this form. In other words, they are in allegorical form.

30. David Hume quoted by Richard H. Bopkin, *Philosophy Made Simple*, ( London, W. H. Allen 1979 ), p. 146.
31. Albert Einstein quoted by David Gelman " Field Theory : Glimpse of Unity " in *Newsweek*, March 12, 1979, p. 48.
32. *Ibid*.
33. Albert Einstein quoted by Peter Gwynne 'Cosmology : Boom or Bust ?' in *Newsweek*. March 12, 1979.



## INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATIONS

- Daya Krishna and A. M. Ghose ( eds ) Contemporary Philosophical Problems : Some Classical Indian Perspectives, Rs. 10/-
- S. V. Bokil ( Tran ) Elements of Metaphysics Within the Reach of Everyone, Rs. 25/-
- A. P. Rao, Three Lectures on John Rawls, Rs. 10/-
- Ramchandra Gandhi ( ed ) Language, Tradition and Modern Civilization, Rs. 50/-
- S. S. Barlingay, Beliefs, Reasons and Reflections, Rs. 70/-
- Daya Krishna, A. M. Ghose and P. K. Srivastav ( eds ) The Philosophy of Kalidas Bhattacharyya, Rs. 60/-
- M. P. Marathe, Meena A. Kelkar and P. P. Gokhale ( eds ) Studies in Jainism, Rs. 50/-
- R. Sundara Rajan, Innovative Competence and Social Change, Rs. 25/-
- S. S. Barlingay ( ed ), A Critical Survey of Completed Research Work in Philosophy in Indian Universities ( upto 1980 ), Part I, Rs. 50/-
- R. K. Gupta, Exercises in Conceptual Understanding, Rs. 25/-
- Vidyut Aklujkar, Primacy of Linguistic Units, Rs. 30/-

**Contact :** The Editor,

Indian Philosophical Quarterly  
Department of Philosophy  
University of Poona,  
Poona-411 007.



## KANT'S CONCEPTION OF RATIONAL ACTION

In Kant's ethics no statement has been put forward as a definition of rational action. But it is true that Kant had a definite idea about such an action because he is mainly concerned with rational actions in his ethics. So what exactly this idea was is to be found out from some of the passages in his works. For convenience, I shall choose one passage from his *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* and try to consider what exactly his idea was. The passage is, "Everything in nature works in accordance with laws. Only a rational being has the power to act in accordance with his idea of laws – that is, in accordance with principles – and only so has he a will."<sup>1</sup> Here we can find his idea of a rational being and also by implication his idea of a rational action : A rational being is one who has the power to act in accordance with his idea of laws; and a rational action is that which is performed in accordance with the idea of a law or principle.

Let us analyse the definition, viz, "a rational act is that which is performed in accordance with the idea of a law or principle" and try to understand what the intended meaning of it is. We may say that the presence of an *idea of law*, and not just *law*, is necessary to exclude mechanical acts, reflexes, instinctive acts, etc. as non-rational activities, for they do occur in accordance with certain laws; only they are not done in accordance with the idea of law.<sup>2</sup> [For the time being let us forget the distinction between a law and a principle.<sup>3</sup>]

Received : 3-5-89



The definition, as it stands, would include only all rational actions of a human being and a holy will. A holy being, as viewed by Kant, has a purely rational will which presents him with universal rational laws. Whereas a human being has a will which is partly rational and partly natural, endowing him with both semi-rational and purely rational practical principles, all acts of a holy being are purely rational acts and there is no possibility for him to act irrationally or semi-rationally. The peculiarity of a human being is that he has a will which makes him capable of acting both in a purely rational and in a semi-rational manner. It is this which makes his acts worthy of moral considerations, worthy of being considered as responsible socially, politically, etc. And it is only the rational acts of a human being as products of the laws of a will that are open to moral evaluation. In his ethical works, Kant is found to be mainly concerned with such acts or conducts of human beings. From this, we may conclude that when Kant discussed rational acts in his ethics he had in his mind the idea of a rational act as that which is performed in accordance with the idea of the law of the will.

From the fact that the definition is to be given in terms of the idea of a law we can infer that a rational action cannot be defined in terms of a law *alone*. Nor, again, can a moral action be defined in terms of the nature of the individual who performs it. Because all his acts, such as reflexes, etc., cannot be said to be rational on the ground that they are done by a rational individual.

The Kantian idea of a rational act understood in the above way differs from that of his predecessors who are his opponents. They viewed a rational act as that which is performed in accordance with the idea of a desired end.<sup>4</sup> But Kant replaced the



*Kant's Conception of Rational Action*

words 'desired end' by the word 'law'. But the apparent antithesis between these two ideas of a rational action may not be real. It may not be the case that those who characterise rational actions in terms of a desired end deny that such acts are performed on the idea of a law and he who holds that such acts are done on the idea of a law denies any desired end in those cases. The class of actions done on an idea of a law need not exclude that of actions done with a desired end. So, the question is, wherein lies the difference between these two conceptions of a rational action? Why did Kant talk about law instead of desired end?

There are two reasons. First, Kant has his own view of human will and its functions. Human will, according to him, is an impulse guided by reason.<sup>5</sup> It is a faculty of desire as well as of reason. Reason, according to Kant, is one but it can function in two ways.<sup>6</sup> It can function in determining the way of satisfying one's desires, inclinations, etc.; i.e., it provides rules for the attainment of its object. It is then practical and it is then a will.<sup>7</sup> Kant, thus, identifies will with practical reason. In its theoretical aspect reason provides order and rules of possible experiences and as such gives knowledge of things as they appear to be. In its practical aspect reason provides laws for the satisfaction of desire and as such "...gives direction to the changes we introduce into this natural order by means of voluntary action."<sup>8</sup> Reason, thus, shows the way by which an impulse is to be satisfied and in doing so it represents an act as a means to the attainment of it. This amounts to saying that an action is not a mere product of an impulse but also of a practical principle. But this is not all. For, reason has a more important function according to Kant and the unique aspect of Kant's approach lies in this. It is he who has firmly maintained that a law of action need not always be a law of satisfying a desire or



an impulse. The unique feature of practical reason consists not in the matter that it represents acts as merely means for the satisfaction of desire but in its ability to present universal practical principles.

Here, I shall make a little digression. Since Kant has identified will with practical reason which consists of practical principles we may introduce a slight change in the body of the definition by replacing the expression 'a law of a will' by the expression 'practical principle' since they are equivalent. Thus, the final definition of the rational action would be that "a rational act is that which is done in accordance with the idea of a practical principle."

This being the first reason for speaking of laws rather than desired ends in his account of rational action, the second reason is that, according to Kant, the prevailing notion of rational action presents a model of action which is inadequate. It is inadequate because it does not accommodate genuinely moral actions. The model presents a rational action as that the end of which must stand related with the agent as an object of his desire. That means, something, in order to become an object for a volition, must be related with the agent in one way, viz. that the agent desires it. In other words, for a volition, the object *O* always stands as the object of desire for the agent *A* while *A* stands related with the act *a* that it is related with the object *O* as a means to it. This model, according to Kant, represents only natural ends like happiness etc., i.e. what men naturally desire and not a moral end which they ought to attain. The natural end is happiness. If a conscious act is always determined by the idea of happiness one cannot have an end which everyone should strive to attain. For, in that case, what one desires may not be desired by another person. The result is a subjective ethics with all its defects, the consequence of which ethics is a predominance



of personal opinions, chaos and rule of subjective principles which ultimately lead to an abolition of all morality. On the other hand, there are, according to Kant, universal laws of action the idea of which may also determine an act and it is only when the act is determined by the conception of such a law the act is morally good. The old model excludes this alternative since it represented end of actions as being always a desired end. But the universal law itself is not a desired end being devoid of any natural content. That is to say, that our acts may also be determined by pure practical reason, i.e. by a moral law.

Thus, by the use of the concepts of 'practical principle' and 'law' Kant claims to have been able to account for all actions that are admitted both by him and his predecessors to be rational (or conscious or voluntary) as well as genuine moral actions in the same model. The Kantian model may be represented in the following way. The end or the object *O* of volition may be of two categories, and may be related with the agent *A*, too, in two different ways. An object of one of these categories becomes the end for an agent in this way that whoever desires *O*, should do *a*. This is the case of a non-moral action. Whereas an object *O*, of the second category becomes an object or an end for an agent by not being an object of desire but by virtue of being a command. This is the case of a moral action. In both the cases the idea of the object determines the will of the agent, but differently in each case. In the first case, the *O* stands related with the agent as being an object of desire and then stands related with the act *a* which is a means to *O*. In the second case, the *O* stands related with the agent as being a law or a command that enjoins a particular act and that is to be obeyed. The mode of determination by the non-moral object is desire, while that by the moral law is reverence. But it must be remembered in this connection that the law or command be-



comes the object for an agent not because the agent reveres it. The law or the command itself by its binding force produces reverence in the mind of the agent that is sufficient to produce volition. This indicates that a genuinely moral action is not one which simply accords with the idea of a moral law but must be done out of reverence for the law, i.e. from the motive of duty. To take an example, a person may appear to act on the moral law that enjoins helping a man in distress, but he may do it from the motive of acquiring fame. In this case the agent has the idea of the law and he also acts accordingly. But his act cannot be said to be moral for the motive from which the act is done is non-moral. To be moral, the act must be done from the motive of duty.

So far we have mentioned only that rational acts are those which are done in accordance with the idea of laws or practical principles. These practical principles may be either universal or non-universal and when a person acts on a non-universal practical principle his reason is said to serve his inclination, etc. Practical principles which are non-universal are those that are not valid for every rational being but for only those who wish to attain the desired end and only when they do so. Such principles are also called material since they have essential reference to the *objects* desired. These become material maxims or subjective principles when they are actually adopted by persons. On the other hand, universal laws of actions are those which are to be adopted by all who are rational beings irrespective of the particular desires they may happen to have. These are called formal, since, roughly speaking, they determine the will by their form and not by their matter.

Kant's conception of material and formal principles needs a further clarification. It is often said that a material principle is one which is oriented towards an end constituting the matter of



the principle whereas a formal principle makes no such reference to an object which can constitute its matter. But let us try to be quite clear about the meaning of a formal practical principle.

Now, what a formal principle of action, as a general rule of behaviour, relates to is different from what a material principle does. A material principle of an act relates to the end which answers the question of why somebody has performed a certain act: the agent has performed the act because he desired a particular end. On the other hand, what a formal principle relates to is not such an end. So, the answer to the question why somebody has acted on a formal practical principle cannot be given in terms of such an end. What, then, would answer this question? It is the fact that the law is binding on the agent, i.e., the law enjoining a particular conduct. Thus, the 'why' in one case relates to the desired end, whereas in the other it relates to the enjoined act itself. The formal principle is, thus, formal in the sense that it is a command or an imperative which enjoins a particular act or demands an unconditional obedience to itself, whatever may be the desire and whatever may be the consequence. In this connection we may attend to some relevant points to avoid possible misunderstandings. In Kant's language:

"A rational being cannot regard his maxims as practical universal laws, unless he conceives them as principles which determine the will, not by their matter, but by their form only. By the matter of a practical principle I mean the object of the will. This object is either the determining ground of the will or it is not... Now when we abstract from a law all matter, i.e., every object of the will (as a determining principle), nothing is left but the mere form of a universal legislation"

...3



Thus, there are two things to be considered. First, the existence of the desired end or object of action and secondly, the role of that object in determining the will. There cannot be an objectless volition. This is what Kant says :

Now, it is indeed undeniable that every volition must have an object, and therefore a matter; but it does not follow that this is the determining principle, and the condition of the maxim; for, if it is so, then this cannot be exhibited in a universally legislative form, since in that case the expectation of the existence of the object would be the determining cause of the choice, and the volition must presuppose the dependence of the faculty of desire on the existence of something; but this dependence can only be sought in empirical conditions, and, therefore, can never furnish a foundation for a necessary and universal rule. " 10

So, the object must be there in some way or other. A material maxim is posterior to the desired object, i.e., the idea of the object determines the principle of action. Whoever desires a particular end like happiness would act on a principle like "I must acquire wealth if I seek happiness." On the other hand, a maxim is formal because it is prior to the object of volition in the sense that the object does not determine what would be the principle, rather it is the principle that determines the will and determines it directly, i.e., not by the object of desire but through reverence for the principle only. It is the law which says whether wealth should be the object of our volition.

Thus in an actual situation, i.e. when a person has a certain desire for an end like wealth, etc. the non-universal practical principles become necessitating for him and as such appear as imperatives. Since these principles command hypothetically to the effect, e.g., that "if anybody desires happiness he should



earn money", these are hypothetical imperatives. They are not necessitating for all, because wealth may not be desired by some people. So it exercises a non-moral necessitation according to Kant. On the other hand, a moral law is recognized as an imperative to an imperfect human being who has a natural tendency to act on desire, inclination etc.<sup>11</sup> It is categorical, having the general form like "I ought to do such and such" which represents an action as unconditionally necessary, i.e. apart from its relation to a further end or result.

The Kantian model of action shows that all actions that are done in accordance with the idea of law or principle are practical and all moral actions are rational. But all rational acts are not necessarily moral. For a morally good action some additional properties are required. If a person acts in accordance with his conception of moral law out of fear of punishment or because he finds pleasure in doing so, he cannot be said to have acted morally in the true sense of the term.<sup>12</sup> In order to have a genuine moral worth, the act must be done out of reverence for the law. Again, if a person acts in accordance with the idea of law which in fact is moral but he does not know it to be so or he knows it to be a law of God, then, according to Kant, he cannot be said to have acted morally in the true sense of the term. According to him, the consciousness that the law is a law of reason, of my own rational will, is necessary, and if he acts with such a consciousness and as such submits to his own real nature with a feeling of reverence for the law then and then only his action can have a genuine moral worth.

The way Kant has described practical principles and corresponding different types of voluntary or rational actions of human beings in his ethics indicates that practical principles are either non-universal or universal according to their having or not having a desired end as a natural content. They are either non-



moral (not morally good) or moral (morally good). The question that immediately arises is : is the division exclusive? That is to say, whether or not a practical principle would always be either of the above two types, i.e. whether they will be either non-moral or moral. And we have seen that a non-moral practical principle is always with a content and is non-universal, while a moral principle is always without a content and universal. But can there be cross-divisions with the effect that there can be practical principles that are non-universal but without content? And can there be practical principles that are universal but non-moral, i.e. without a moral import? In other words, whether there are any such principles of action that are non-moral, non-universal but without content and whether there are universal or strictly rational but non-moral principles. Now, even if the Kantian notion of rational action becomes too narrow by excluding such cases (if there really are such cases) then also, for this reason, it would not logically follow that his moral theory is wrong. According to Kant's theory, there cannot be any principles of the first type and any action corresponding to them.

The principles that have natural content must be non-universal. Regarding the second point, i.e. whether there can be a non-moral but strictly rational principle of action for a human being the answer is also negative. For in order to become purely rational it should be without a content and to become non-moral it must fail to arouse reverence for the law. But there are certain acts performed by human beings which seem to result from the above two types of principles. Acts like moving a pen from this corner to that corner of the table during conversation, which are performed in the day-to-day life, obviously are not initiated by desire but they involve some non-universal law like stretching the hand and picking the thing in order to put it in another corner.



Still, these are cases which can neither be taken to be rational acts nor be taken as an irrational and so cannot be a product of a practical principle in the Kantian sense. So, how are these to be explained? Take another example. A person, while going to hire a taxi is suddenly asked by a beggar for a coin and he just opens his purse and gives him a coin. The incident takes a few seconds. There is no desire in the mind, no compassion, nor a clear consciousness of the rule or principle of helping the poor. We cannot take it just as a mechanical action, nor can we take it to be rational in Kant's sense, for we do not find any principle of desire determining it. It cannot be moral because the act is not determined by a clear consciousness of the law as a moral law of reason, i.e., as a law of his own will. The act only accords with a moral law. But we cannot call it either a mechanical act or a non-moral act. An attempt can be made to find out a determining principle by asking the agent why he did what he did. He may answer that he had a disposition to act on a moral principle and it is from this disposition that he performed the act. But still Kant's criterion that a moral act must be done out of reverence for the law is not fulfilled. So the act cannot be regarded as moral in the required sense. In other words, so long as the act is considered as being performed with no desire to give something to the man (independently of moral consideration) it falls within the first category of acts that are done on principle that are non-universal but without content. And in so far as the act is considered as being performed on a moral law and determined by no desire it falls within the second category of acts that follow from non-moral but strictly rational laws. But would Kant take such acts as rational ones? Or how would he account for the above two cases? If the act is considered as one which is done with no desire and without a consciousness of the law, we can, from the standpoint of Kant, regard it as a type of mechanical act that merely appears to be conscious. Now take



the act in the second sense. We have seen that if by a purely rational non-moral act we mean just an act that is done on a moral law without reverence for it and without a desire to do the same then the act fulfils the conditions of being strictly rational. But certainly Kant or anyone else would hesitate to take it to be strictly rational. How to deal with such embarrassing cases? A strictly rational act must be such that there is a conscious determination of the will by the law in question either through desire or through respect. But the present case lacks both. Still, so long as the characteristics are taken superficially the act appears to have a claim to be regarded as rational. And we do such acts in our everyday life. The possible answer from the side of Kant would be that these are more of a type of mechanical acts than of the rational. For here there is no conscious determination. These are habitual acts which had once at their very root some conscious efforts that gave them the rational character but lose that character when in course of time become habitual and can be performed without attention. These, in the words of G. F. Stout are "automatic".<sup>13</sup> Again, somebody may hold that sometimes for doing such acts also men are held morally responsible if they lead to serious consequences like murder, etc. The answer would be that it is not the said act for which the agent is held morally blameworthy, but for the lack of attention or negligence on the part of the agent that leads to the said result. This shows that it is not possible for a human being to perform a strictly rational non-moral act, and that, there cannot be a volition for a human being with respect to such laws.

Now, we may point to certain other acts like doing sums or making mathematical derivations from axioms by rules, etc., and ask what will be the fate of such acts according to the Kantian criterion of rational acts? Obviously, there are certain principles



and some conscious physical movements corresponding to them. But the way of derivation does not fit in the model of practical principles. These principles neither seem to have a natural content nor have a moral import that can arouse reverence. Consequently Kant's criterion of being a rational act does not apply to such cases and certainly becomes too narrow. But what will be Kant's reading regarding such acts? I shall try to determine first of all whether such acts really have no natural content. Cases like this may be explained in the following manner. When a person engages himself in some mathematical derivations he is involved in some physical activities no doubt and such activities appear to have no motivating desire but follows certain rules of reason (and some physical behaviour accordingly). The whole situation looks like an act done from purely rational principles. So, one may conclude that there can be practical principles that are rational but without content. But if we closely observe the situation we shall find it to be a complex action involving some purely rational principles and also some principles that are not purely rational. It is rather a case of problem solving which is actually the act that is to be considered and that surely involves material practical principles.

Kantian scheme of practical principles shows that rational actions are either done on a principle of desire or on a principle of duty. The question now is regarding the classification of rational acts into moral, immoral and a-moral acts. The classification is to be made within the general class of rational actions as has been described previously. Granting that only a rational act can be treated as moral, a further three-fold distinction can be made among acts that are moral, immoral and a-moral. A moral rational act is one which is done on a moral law out of reverence for the law. An immoral rational act is one which is performed on a non-universal practical principle in violation to



the moral law. Whereas, a rational a-moral act is that which is not done on a moral law out of reverence for the law nor in violation to it but merely done on a principle of desire.

According to Kant, a human being is thus free to determine on what principle it will act by virtue of possessing a free will. Acts are morally good or bad not because they are accompanied by good desire or bad desire but because of the principle on which the agent chooses to act. Desires, inclinations etc. as such are neither good nor bad.<sup>14</sup> It is principle of desire or duty the moral agent chooses which determines the moral worth of the act.

Department of Philosophy  
Victoria Institution for Girls  
78/B, A. P. Chandra Road  
CALCUTTA-700 009

TORA BASU

## NOTES

1. H. J. Paton, *Moral Law : Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*-Translated by H. J. Paton, p. 76, Edition 1972.

In the book *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason* Thomas Kingsmill Abbott has translated the passage as :

"Everything in nature works according to laws. Rational beings alone have the faculty of acting according to the conception of laws, that is according to principles, i. e., have a will". - p. 29. 6th Edition.

2. H. J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative*. p. 82, Edition - 1953 "..... practical reason, with a maxim of subjective principles, is present in every kind of human action - even in action that we call impulsive-provided that it is consciously willed. This is what distinguishes human actions from animal behaviour, or again from what's called 'reflex actions', which we do not regard as our action at all".
3. Paton, *Moral Law* p. 84, Edition - 1972  
"A maxim is a subjective principle of action and must be distinguished



from an objective principle—namely a practical law. The former contains a practical rule determined by reason in accordance with the conditions of the subject (often his ignorance or again his inclinations): It is thus a principle on which the subject acts. A law, on the other hand, is an objective principle valid for every rational being, and it is a principle on which he ought to act that is an imperative”.

4. Lewis White Beck, *Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 38, Edition - 1960.

“Will is the faculty of acting according to a conception of law, which is not a product or discovery of understanding but of reason. In contrast, his predecessors had thought of will as only rational desire i. e., the faculty of acting according to a clear (rational) representation of the object of desire”.

5. Lewis White Beck, *Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 39.

6. *Ibid*, p. 39.

7. *Ibid*.

8. Lewis White Beck, *Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 39.

9. *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*—Translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott. 6th Edition and other works on the Theory of Ethics, p. 114.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

11. H. J. Paton, *Moral Law*, p. 26, Edition - 1972.

“To imperfectly rational beings objective principles seem almost to constrain or (in Kant's technical language) to necessitate the will—that is, they seem to be imposed upon the will from without instead of being its necessary manifestation (as they would be in the case of a wholly rational agent).

12. *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and other Works*, Translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, p. 14, 6th Edition.

“.....there are many minds so sympathetically constituted that, without any other motive of vanity or self-interest, they find a pleasure in spreading joy around them, and can take delight in the satisfaction of others so far as it is their own work. But I maintain that is such a case an action of this kind, however proper, however amiable it may be, has nevertheless no true moral worth, but is on a level with other inclination e. g. the inclination to honour, which, if it is happily directed to that which is in fact of public utility and accordant with duty, and conse-



quently honourable, deserves praise and encouragement, but not esteem. For the maxim lacks the moral import, namely that such actions be done from duty, not from inclination”.

- 13 G. F. Stout, *A Manual of Psychology*, p. 224, 5th Edition : and p. 227...  
.....“ the formation of habit is an example of facilitation. The disposition left behind by previous condition facilitates subsequent conation in the attainment of its end. When this process of facilitation reaches a point at which conscious behaviour is no longer necessary, the action becomes automatic ”.
14. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Translated by Theodore M. Greene and Hyot H. Hudson. Edition – 1960, p. 17. “..... the source of evil cannot lie in an object determining the will through inclination, nor yet in a natural impulse, can be only in a rule made by the will for the use of its freedom. That is in a maxim ”.



## FICTIONAL EMOTION, QUASI-DESIRE AND BACKGROUND BELIEF

### I

In *Art and Imagination*<sup>1</sup> Roger Scruton offers an analysis of aesthetic emotions as an 'imagined counterpart' of real-life emotions. The key to this analysis is his theory of imagination, according to which imagination is a species of 'unasserted' thought essentially contrasted with belief. While belief is at the heart of real-life emotions, aesthetic emotions are founded on imagination. Despite this difference in the structure of these two emotions, our response to works of art is said to be similar to our response to real life. As Scruton writes : 'to find a work of art sad is to respond to it in the way I respond to a man when I am 'touched' by his sadness' (p. 72).

In this paper my aim is to critically discuss Scruton's account of aesthetic emotion *vis-a-vis*, on the one hand, the contrast between imagination and belief and, on the other hand, the analysis of real-life emotions in terms of belief and desire. I shall try to show how his treatment of the problem is inadequate, and what can be done to make up for this deficiency. I shall end with a general note on the possibility of our response to fiction.

### II

Scruton explains real-life emotions as 'a complex of belief and desire, united in a causal relation' (p. 128). Anger, for example, involves the belief that someone has done injustice, and

Received : 17-3-87



this belief gives rise to the desire to punish the unjust person. Fear embodies the belief in something dangerous and the desire to avoid the dangerous object. Thus, in each case, the belief attributes some property to an actual object, and from the belief issues a desire to act or behave in an appropriate way. In contrast, aesthetic emotions, being directed towards situations and characters depicted in works of art, do not involve beliefs that attribute properties to actual objects. For their objects are merely imagined to exist. Since no belief is involved, no desire is included in such emotions. The question therefore arises as to how there can be an element of feeling in the so-called aesthetic emotions, when they are altogether devoid of belief and desire.

Since aesthetic experience is founded on unasserted thought, 'is the expression of aesthetic experience,' questions Scruton, 'the expression of anything more than a thought' (p. 130)? Surely, if aesthetic response is to count as *emotional* response to works of art, there must be some affective content to aesthetic experience. To solve this problem Scruton takes recourse to his theory of imagination. People and events depicted in works of art are, as it were, fictional analogues of real-life people and their situations. It is the fictionalising attitude of imagination which establishes an intentional nexus with fictional characters and their fate. Imagination accounts both for the intentionality and the causation of our response to works of art, analogous to the way belief explains, intentionally and causally, our response to real-life. In Scruton's theory, imagination is recognised as causally efficacious substitute for belief. We are moved by fiction not because of belief or willing suspension of disbelief, but because of imagination.

In what does our being moved by fiction consist? The answer to this question is to be drawn from a careful examination of the



structure of real-life emotions. Scruton wants us to take the belief-desire analysis of emotions as the paradigm for explicating the notion of aesthetic emotion. We shall therefore look for the fictional analogues of belief and desire in the constitution of aesthetic emotion. While the analogue of belief is an unasserted thought, what is the analogue of desire which is supposed to arise from the thought entertained unasserted?

The question is rather difficult, and it seems to me that more needs to be said to answer it than Scruton's scanty account. He suggests that there can also be an 'entertained' version of desire, just as there are thoughts entertained unasserted. If we can entertain unasserted just those thoughts that in a real-life context would amount to beliefs, we can also entertain, together with these unasserted thoughts, the desires that would issue from their asserted counterpart in real-life. Scruton stresses:

Why do we not say that I also entertain, along with these (thoughts), the desires that would also, in the normal circumstance (of real-life), arise out of them? Why can I not 'entertain' desires? ... In other words, just as I may recreate in my imagination the thoughts that I would have, so can I recreate the feelings which these thoughts give rise to (p. 129).

The implication of this passage is that the 'entertained' desires are a causal concomitant of imagination in much the same way real desires are a causal consequence of belief. It is also implied that to entertain a desire is to have a certain kind of feeling which resembles the experience of having a real desire. I shall describe the former experience as a quasi-desire. Rephrasing the distinction, we may now say that just as desires stand to belief in the constitution of real-life emotions, so do quasi-desires stand to imagination or unasserted thought in emotional response.



to fiction. And it is the occurrence of quasi-desires, as Scruton would say, that lends the element of feeling to aesthetic emotions.

Difficulties begin to emerge at this point. The contrast between belief and imagination is drawn in respect of the attitude of propositional assent. While belief involves assenting to the truth of a proposition, imagination consists in entertaining a proposition without the attitude of assent. Thus imagination can also be characterised as a state of 'unbelief' in that it presupposes the withdrawal of that attitude to a proposition which is a prerequisite of belief. Corresponding to this clear contrast, it is quite unclear, on Scruton's account, what is withdrawn in entertaining a desire, i.e. in having a quasi-desire. We are left wondering in *what* respect a quasi-desire differs from a desire analogous to the way imagination differs from belief with respect to the attitude of propositional assent.

We may be misled into searching for a fictional analogue of desire independently of belief; for what remains to be brought to light is the important conceptual point that a quasi-desire is to be distinguished from a desire by reference to belief itself. The relation of quasi-desire to desire cannot be construed apart from the belief that generates the desire, which means that the parallelism between belief versus imagination on the one hand and desire versus quasi-desire on the other does not hold. This follows from the conceptual dependency of desire upon belief.

### III

A desire not only stems from a particular belief, but depends on the belief for its identity. It is in terms of the (asserted) thought underlying belief that a desire can be identified and classified as a particular desire. Basically, a desire consists of a thought together with an affectively charged reactive tendency. The thought is a belief and it determines the object towards



which the reactive tendency or felt inclination is directed. For example, if Sally desires to take Harry to task for an irresponsible conduct on his part, her desire can be identified by reference to her belief that he should be reprimanded for his irresponsible behaviour. Without the belief her conative urge cannot be specified as the desire to reprove him.

If Sally's mental state is transformed from belief to 'unbelief' — that is to say, if the thought underlying her belief is, as it were, rendered unasserted — the affective state of her mind would naturally be expected to undergo some kind of modification. The most drastic form of modification would be the extinction of the desire, if she realised, for instance, that her belief was mistaken. (Indeed, she might feel the desire to apologise.) This, however, is not relevant to Scruton's purpose. What is pertinent to the issue is the possibility of Sally's having the quasi-desire — or her being in an affective state resembling desire — to take Harry to task even when she merely imagines him having done the irresponsible act. But what is it like to experience a quasi-desire in a fictional way? I think this question calls for a discussion of the connection of desire to action in relation to emotion.

In real life, emotions are also motives to action. As motives they give rise to specific desires, which in turn occasion appropriate actions or behaviour. Jealousy elicits the desire to change the situation which appears adverse to the wishes and interests of the jealous person. And this desire may actually engage the person on a course of action to bring about the desired end. Similarly, anger embodies the desire to punish the unjust person, and this desire normally causes the angry person to do something which results in the punishment being meted out. There is thus a practical end, an action-strategy, to real-life emotions inasmuch as desire is a component of such emotions.



Devoid of belief and desire, aesthetic emotions do not encourage the adoption of any action-strategy that directly bears upon their objections. As products of artistic fiction, or creations of imagination, the objects of aesthetic emotions are, indeed, meant not to be the targets of actions. Aesthetic responses are sustained by unasserted thoughts about fictionally depicted objects. However, such responses can also, on Scruton's view, be infused with reactive tendencies or felt urges towards their objects somewhat in the way emotional responses to real life are characterised by conative urges actually to engage in action. This is why it seems right to use the expression 'quasi-desire' to describe the reactive tendencies felt toward fiction. Born of imagination and confined to the imaginary, quasi-desires are not intentional causes of action.

Yet the question remains as to why imagination succeeds in moving us in the above-indicated way. If, for example, Sally imagines Harry (a fictional character depicted in a work of fiction) being negligent to important duties, she comes to feel the quasi-desire to take 'him' to task. And her emotional response to the character resembles her normal affective response to an analogous real-life person. How is it that an aesthetic response bred in imagination is laden with a felt inclination which is similar to an inclination alive in an analogous real-life response? The answer, not disclosed in Scruton's account, is that it is the same *disposition* to react resentfully towards an actual agent of irresponsible conduct which is activated, through imagination, in Sally's mind by her unasserted thought of the fictional agent, namely Harry. And it is intrinsic to the intentionality of her quasi-desire that its object or target is in the domain of art, which is why the felt urge remains held back within 'a non-practical' aesthetic frame of mind.



It would be quite wrong however, to conclude from the non-practical nature of aesthetic responses that they are virtually impractical. For such responses may find proper practical expression in our subsequent behaviour in real-life situations. Indeed, Sally would be at odds with herself if, after having responded resentfully towards a fictional character, she failed to resent the actions of an actual person in a similar situation. In real life, her normal reaction would, following the occurrence of resentment, be expressed in an act of rebuking the irresponsible person. None the less, the non-practicality of aesthetic response marks the conceptual autonomy of the aesthetic attitude — the attitude to art as such — from the 'natural,' non-aesthetic attitude involved in emotional response to real life. It does not follow from this, however, that aesthetic responses are practically inefficacious. Their practical bearing on subsequent experiences of real life may be indirect and not clearly discernible. On this Scruton's remarks seem apposite :

There is a non-contingent connection...between imagined emotion and the behaviour that, in other circumstances (i.e. in real-life), counts as an expression of the corresponding 'real' emotion. What I feel in the presence of works of art may find its ultimate expression in my behaviour towards my fellows. My 'imagined' feelings can show their effect in the expression of their 'real' counterparts (p. 131).

#### IV

It is, perhaps, an interesting truth about our mental life that we can experience genuine resentment (among other emotions) at *imagined* misconduct of characters much as we resent *believed* misconduct of our fellow beings. Our response to art crystallises



the significance of this truth. Scruton would say that the basis of this truth is to be found in his theory of imagination. His theory will explain, with regard to the above example, that imagining someone being the agent of some misconduct contains the same thought-content which is contained in believing someone to be the agent of such a misconduct.<sup>2</sup> And the recurrence of the same thought in imagination occasions the occurrence of an imagined counterpart of resentment. Is this a sufficient explanation of emotional response to fiction? It seems to me that Scruton's theory leaves out a deeper truth.

What it leaves out is the apparently shadowy truth that, as we 'enter into' the fictional world of works of art, we carry with us the same repertoire of beliefs and their cognate attitudes, which are characteristically involved in our emotional response to real-life. Though participation with characters and events of fiction is a kind of make-believe enactment of ourselves as denizens of an imaginary realm, we remain bound to the repertoire even when we are in confrontation with fictional objects. We are determined by this repertoire in the way we appreciate and respond to fiction. These beliefs exert causal influence in shaping the nature of our appreciation and response. Thus it is the same network of beliefs, forming an active background of our emotional appreciation of the fate of our fellow beings, which operates in the generation of our emotive reactions or quasi-desires towards *dramatis personae*,

If this is right, it follows that there is more to the thought-content of aesthetic responses than the content of mere imagination. For the 'imaginative' thought-process is pregnant with background beliefs. This fact in turn implies that there is an undercurrent of 'asserted' thoughts beneath the surface of thoughts entertained be unasserted. Thus, some beliefs form part



of the 'deep structure' of aesthetic emotions. Without the infiltration of these 'seminal' beliefs, imagination stands to emotion in much the same way as an unfertilised ovum stands to a possible individual.

BIJOY H. BORUAH

Department of  
Humanities and Social Science  
I. I. T. Kanpur-208016 (U.P.)

#### NOTES

1. Roger Scruton, *Art and Imagination* (London: Methuen & Co, 1974), Part II, Chapters 6 - 10. All subsequent page references are to this work.
2. Cf. 'Thus when we imagine something, or tell a story, while being indifferent to its truth, the content of our thought is the content of a belief; but the thought process itself is independent of this belief' (p. 89)



## THE PHILOSOPHY OF KALIDAS BHATTACHARYYA

Proceedings of a seminar organised by the Department of Philosophy, Rajasthan University, the book contains a critical appraisal of various aspects of the late **Kalidas Bhattacharyya's** philosophical thought, and includes his own final formulation of his philosophical position.

Edited by **Daya Krishna, A. M. Ghose and P. K. Srivastava**

The book includes contributions from **K. L. Sharma** (A Step Beyond K. C. Bhattacharyya), **Daya Krishna** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya and the Logic of Alternation), **S. K. Chattopadhyaya** (Professor Bhattacharyya's "Alternative Standpoints" of Philosophy), **K. Bagchi** (Subjective and Objective Attitudes as Alternatives: A study of Professor Kalidas Bhattacharyya's view of Knowledge-Object Unity), **N. K. Sharma** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya's Philosophy: Alternative Absolutes), **R. S. Bhatnagar** (Philosophy and Meta-Philosophy: Study of a Fundamental Dichotomy in Kalidas Bhattacharyya's Thought), **Mrs. Yogesh Gupta** (Pre-suppositions of Science and Philosophy: A Critical Study), **Mrinal Kanti Bhadra** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya's View of Freedom and Existentialist Thought), **Rajendra Prasad** (Freedom and Existential Thought), **Rajendra Prasad Pandey** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya on the Indian Concept of Man), **K. J. Shah** (Religion—Sophisticated and Unsophisticated), **J. N. Mohanty** (Kalidas Bhattacharyya as a Metaphysician).

1/8 Demy, Pages 239. Price Rs. 60/-

Contact: The Editor,

Indian Philosophical Quarterly,

Department of Philosophy,

Poona University, PUNE 411 007.



## THE MORALITY OF ANIMALS

The idea that of all living creatures man alone has morality is quite widespread in the philosophical tradition. Although we sometimes describe animal behaviour by using expressions which suggest moral qualities (for example, we often speak of dog as a 'faithful' animal, horse as a 'noble' animal, and so on), no serious view is usually entertained with regard to the question of the morality of animals. The present paper attempts to find out whether we are justified in drawing a sharp distinction between men and animals other than men, so far as moral behaviour is concerned.

In the very beginning let me make a cautionary remark about the exact scope of this paper. The present paper will try to explore the issues relating to the morality of animals; it will not be concerned with the question of morality *towards* animals, the question as to whether or not we behave morally with animals. The second question is distinct from the former, although both the questions have to deal with some common issues, say, the sensitivity of animals to pain and suffering

Do not animals ever behave in such ways as would suggest morality on their part? Indeed, many of us would agree that many animals do behave in ways that tends to suggest morality in the sense that similar behaviour on the part of human beings would be explained in moral language. Thus, we would readily agree that many animals show love towards one another, care

Received : 20-11-88



for their young, have respect for figures of authority, refuse to fight if the opponent has submitted, and so on. The present paper does not, by any means, claim that *all* kinds of animals behave morally. My contention in this paper is that the behaviour of *many* animals can, indeed, be said to be approaching moral behaviour in many respects, and that the morality of mankind might very well have its roots in certain basic responses of loyalty, mercy, affection, self-sacrifice etc., as can be found in animals.

Studies in animal behaviour have received a renewed vigour ever since Darwinism became popular. Yet, the idea that morality is something which we possibly share with animals is vehemently rejected. We take pride in thinking that we are radically different from animals so far as morality is concerned, that morality is something that characterizes human behaviour alone. We tend to think of animals as entirely 'animal', and in common parlance animal behaviour is referred to as either lustful or violent or brutal or blindly affectionate. Indeed, there is a strong tendency to describe whatever falls short of human worth as animal-like. Common talk is studded with expressions like 'brutal murder', 'beastly behaviour', 'animal pleasures' etc.

One of the reasons for refusing to consider animals as moral beings is the strong belief in the time-honoured distinction between intelligence and instinct. Animals, it is believed, are moved not by intelligence, but by instinct. If any behaviour on the part of an animal appears as intelligent, it is interpreted as wholly instinctual. The animal, it is believed, follows its instinct, although to us it appears as intelligent. Thus, a rigid distinction is drawn between instinct and intelligence. But can intelligence be sharply distinguished from instinct? The abilities of intelligence need a strong foundation for their development, and this foundation is



*The Morality of Animals*

provided by the instinctual apparatus. As Stephen Clark rightly points out :

We are very fortunate that we do not have to invent the notion of a language for ourselves, and could not possibly acquire the ability to speak a particular mother-tongue without an innate ability to pick out certain sorts of patterns from the sounds that surround us.<sup>1</sup>

The common innate endowment does not, however, rule out different individuals.

It is believed that if an animal trying to solve a problem fails to solve it, it tries the problem again or acts in a confused manner or resorts to random activities. This confused behaviour in the event of failure is said to indicate a lack of intelligence. But confusion need not necessarily be a sign of lack of intelligence. On the contrary, such confused behaviour seems to suggest that the animal is desperately trying to find out a solution to the problem. Human beings, too, may resort to trial and error techniques when they fail to solve a problem. (This is not to deny that they try other techniques as well.) Studies in animal learning suggest that some animals do have the capacity to work in more or less novel ways. Consider the case of the macaque who was able to separate wheat from sand by throwing handfuls of the mixture into the sea. By no means can this process of separating one ingredient of a mixture from the other be taken as an instance of a 'blind', 'instinctual', 'merely animal' act. It seems that some animals do find out new ways of solving puzzles even if the various patterns with which they are familiar determine the field of their choice.<sup>2</sup> The idea that no animals are intelligent, that they are moved by instinct alone, does not appear to be a sound one.



We have just now seen that we are apt to regard trial-and-error behaviour on the part of animals as 'blind', 'random' or 'confused', although similar-trial-and-error behaviour on the part of human beings is not condemned as stupid or as foolish. Something similar happens when we talk of desires and beliefs. A male robin who prefers attacking a red feather to a camouflaged rival robin is considered to be stupid, but if a human being prefers an appropriate picture to a present person about whose character he is in the dark, his behaviour is not supposed to be blind or mechanical<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, there is a distinction between evolutionary function and individual goal. If the robin only wants to drive off an intruder, then his attack on the red feather proves to be futile; but what have we got to say if the red colour itself irritates him? Similarly, the use of contraceptives is an individual goal that serves no purpose in the evolutionary process, but the use of contraceptives is never considered to be a proof of human stupidity. The question whether animals do or do not have beliefs is a rather complex one. There are many of us who would outright refuse to admit that animals have 'belief'. But in common talk we do refer to animals as having beliefs: thus, we say that a dog believes that the master is at the door, or that there is a stranger outside. We human beings, too, believe many things even if we do not speak about them. Then there are beliefs which are beliefs in a very strict sense, and which men alone are said to have. These are beliefs in the sense of an attitude of commitment to the contents of beliefs. It is this kind of belief that animals are said to lack, for if an animal cannot articulate a certain belief, how could it possibly have an attitude towards it? (Infants, too, would be classed with the animals in this respect.) But is this attitude of commitment to the content of beliefs so universal as to be classed as distinctively human? What about the Pyrrhonian sceptics who refused to commit themselves to any thing? Moreover, it is not so obvious whether



people generally believe that what they believe is true. Consciously committing ourselves to something which follows from what we believe is too sophisticated a social custom to be labelled as universal.<sup>4</sup>

What about communication on the part of animals? It seems to be too rash to conclude that just because animals do not have verbal language, they are incapable of communicating to each other. Human infants can communicate their problems long before they can use verbal language properly. Animals like chimpanzees are found to communicate with each other in various ways: they often deceive and entrap their prey. It is true that such behaviour merely amounts to a communication about their own moods, say, a threat or an invitation, and not to any statement about the world. Talk about things of the world is too complex an activity to be carried on by animals, or for that matter, human infants, who do not use verbal language. But there are countless moments in the lives of human beings when they are not worried about stating facts, moments when they are far from being considered as lacking in consciousness, intentional activity and the like<sup>5</sup>. One thing that seems to be lacking in animal communication is a common code, but even in this respect there is an exception: the 'language' of bees.<sup>6</sup> The well-known dance of the bees upon the face of the honeycomb strongly suggests a similarity with human communication, although one should add that communication on the part of bees is over a restricted range of acts and objects.

Can animals communicate about communication? Some studies<sup>7</sup> suggest that they do. Some animals are capable of signalling about signals, that is to say, they use signals, but they make others understand that the signals are meant in play and not to be taken seriously. It seems that it is this kind of 'meta-communication' that contains the roots of our ability to understand the



different meanings of the same object which again involves seeing the object in its context. Understanding the meaning of any expression apart from the context, that is to say, understanding things in the abstract, proves to be difficult not only for animals but also for men. Difficult though it may be, evidence clearly suggests that animals can abstract in various situations, they show a readiness to form and respond to a particular pattern in the midst of many quickly changing shapes.<sup>8</sup> Some animals can generalize with regard to their expectation of reward or punishment. Rats in a laboratory, for example, can generalize from sight of a horizontal bar to a horizontal row of dots or squares.

It is sometimes said that animals are not moral beings because they do not have self-awareness. Animals, it is believed, do not have a concept of themselves because they cannot talk. But is linguistic ability necessary for forming a concept of oneself as a being in the world? Human infants, like non-human animals, do not use verbal language, but that does not prevent them from being able to recognize similarity of colours, shapes, smells etc., identity of persons, cause of distress and the like. In other words, they show themselves to be capable of classifying things, although they are incapable of giving names to them. Similarly, lack of linguistic ability need not prevent animals from having a 'pre-verbal' concept of themselves. As Clark so aptly puts it:

Having a concept and being able to consider it are different things. I may have the concept of redness long before I can talk about redness or relate it to a general theory of perception. I may use the concept of moral accountability long before I can consider what such a thing might be.<sup>9</sup>

A close study of animal behaviour suggests that animals, mobile creatures as they are, show themselves to be capable of distinguishing in practice, between the world through which their movements take place and their own selves that move through



it. They can re-identify places and things; they can also identify other animals. A recent work on animal behaviour shows that mother vervet monkeys can not only identify the cry of their own offspring, but can also recognize whose offspring (other than their own) is crying, and often try to find out the mother of the crying baby monkey.<sup>10</sup>

The capacity of an animal to distinguish himself from others also finds expression in territorial behaviour. Many animals are very territorial in so far as they lay claim upon a certain area and defend it against rival claimants. This territorial behaviour contains the roots of the consciousness of the rights of possession. Animals intruding upon others' territories do not fight as well as the possessors and are easily discouraged.

It might be said that self-awareness on the part of animals is doubtful in so far as they cannot acknowledge past actions as their own or plan their future. But can it be said that *all* human beings are capable of connecting the past with the present? We do often doubt our past actions and find it hard to recognize our previous self. Planning of long-term future actions is also not true of all human beings, and even if planning of future actions is quite common, it seems to be more due to social conditioning rather than to anything inherent in human nature.<sup>11</sup> Are all non-human animals incapable of acknowledging their past actions? An Ameslan gorilla called Koko is said to have expressed regret for biting her teacher three days ago.<sup>12</sup> Another case is that of Toto, a gorilla, who, too, regretted for having broken her owner's wrists.<sup>13</sup> Then, what about the planning of future? Is animal behaviour marked by its total absence? It seems not, though impossible it might sound to some ears. It is true that long-term future plans are difficult to be found among non-human animals, but it cannot be said that preference to future goals is completely unknown to them. Animals who live



in a changing environment do not always behave in stereotyped ways; they sometimes deviate from the routine behaviour and act in such a way that they would benefit in future. So it seems plausible to maintain that they take note of changes and try to learn from them.<sup>14</sup>

Can non-human animals be said to distinguish between what is good for them and what is good for others? In other words, is it possible for them to be egoists or altruists? But first of all, let us make it clear whether any animal, human or non-human, can be said to be capable of 'genuine' altruistic behaviour. Many biologists would make us believe that behaviour which we commonly consider to be altruistic, as promoting the good of another being, even at one's own cost, is not 'genuinely' altruistic, because to be a 'genuine' altruist is to act in such a way as to have the consequence of diminishing one's genetic fitness. This means that if anyone is a 'genuine' altruist, he is diminishing the chances of there being 'genuine' altruists in the next generation. Judged from this point of view, neither parental care, nor concern for siblings or cousins would be considered to be an act of 'genuine' altruism. But if 'genuine' altruism is so rare, 'genuine' egoism too would be rare, because a 'genuine' egoist would be one who prefers his individual good at the cost of his own genetic fitness. So the truth rather seems to be that showing concern for one's own good is not a simple attitude but one that requires considerable sophistication. What is good for me depends on my needs and wants, and I may actually need and want happy companions and friends. So the biological argument we have just considered should be interpreted as suggesting that we have the needs and habits that we have because in the past such needs and habits made our ancestors act in such a way that (in that situation) they succeeded in leaving in leaving more descendants than those who did not act in that way.<sup>15</sup>



There is no doubt that many non-human animals behave in such a way as to earn themselves the label of 'altruists.' Many animals defend and rescue young who are not their own; some again may adopt orphans. Dolphins and elephants help and rescue adult members of their own species. Some wild dogs are reported to have fed sick and injured adults. Again, there are some activities which seem to benefit not the agents but others. The mother bird who gives warning cries and thus diverts predators from her brood is running a risk. Finding new homes or sources of food also involve taking risks. But however altruistic these activities might appear to be, it is doubtful whether these altruistic activities are consciously aimed at, that is to say, whether they are acting with any view to helping others. So how do we explain this 'altruistic' animal behaviour? Could it be that the animal's awareness, things they are capable of attending to, and the manner in which they are capable of reacting — all had something to contribute to such altruistic behaviour? Sensitivity to the sufferings of fellow members of the same species is something that has a wide range, being negligible in some species, while quite strong in some others. Some social species of animals might have that sensitivity to such an extent that it quickly paves the way for a drastic action. The above examples of animal altruism are not induced by example, precept or training. Nor are they backed up by conscious calculation. Giving warning cries or rescuing a fellow sufferer seem to be due to adaptation. So such altruistic behaviour seems to have, on the whole, a selective advantage. In other words, from the evolutionary point of view it 'pays' to be such an altruist.<sup>16</sup>

What light does caring for the young, on the part of animals, throw on their morality? It may be noted at the outset that caring for the young does not mean caring for one's own offspring alone. Like human beings, non-human animals too care



for others' offsprings. Many barren female animals have been found to shower maternal love upon foster children. We have already mentioned that babysitting is not uncommon among many animals. Among birds, caring for the young is carried on by both male and female partners. (Among sparrows even incubating the eggs is done by the male parent.) Among many fishes, the male parent takes charge of the eggs after they have been fertilized. Soon after fertilization has taken place he drives away the female so that she may not eat up the fertilized eggs. The father protects the eggs from any possible intrusion. Some of them even build a kind of protecting nest around the eggs and some others again carry the developing eggs in their mouths or in abdominal folds.<sup>17</sup> Among higher mammals, however, it is the female who is more adapted to the nurture of the young. Sometimes there is a rivalry to get hold of a young animal, a fact which suggests that animals do not find caring for the young to be a function forced on them; rather, caring for the young seems to be something they are very much inclined to do. Caring for the young of other animals is carried on not only by females but also by males. Among some apes, baboons and monkeys, this is quite common. It should be noted, however, that this kind of caring, on the part of males, generally takes the form of protection rather than nurture.

So much for altruistic behaviour on the part of non-human animals. We may now turn to the question of privacy in the animal world. Can we speak of desire, or for that matter, respect for privacy, among animals other than human beings? Could it be that man's reaction to any invasion on his privacy is not peculiar to him alone, but has its origins in the biological processes of all life? Alan F. Westin<sup>18</sup>, for example, has pointed out that man's desire for privacy does not seem to be distinctively human, but may be rooted in his animal origins. Various studies<sup>19</sup>



in animal behaviour suggest that desire for privacy, be it in the form of periodic individual isolation or in the form of intimacy between a few individuals, is widespread in the animal kingdom. In the animal world this desire for privacy often takes the form of what has been described as the tendency towards territoriality, whereby an animal lays claim to a particular area and tries to defend that area against possible intrusion. Scientists have found that the territorial patterns serve to ensure propagation of the species by regulating density to available resources. Birds like herring gulls, herons and cormorants nest closer together when the nearby sea offers lots of fish. They nest farther apart when fish available is comparatively less in amount. Songbirds, like robins, are famous for marking out their territories during the breeding season. Defending the territories is a task usually carried out by the males, but sometimes even the females may defend the boundaries. As Brown and Herrnstein so aptly put it :

This does not mean that the birds must steadily patrol their frontiers and spend a lot of time fighting off invasions. Instead, birdsong, which carries no intrinsic threat, is recognized within a species as a signal of space already taken. Birdsong generally coincides with sunrise, not so much because birds are happy to see the sun again, though perhaps they are, but primarily because the recurrent event makes possible a definite limited time during which to warn off potential invaders.<sup>20</sup>

The territorial patterns of animals enrich individual well-being and the intimacy of small groups. As in men, so in non-human animals, one often finds different mechanisms for setting distances between different individuals in a group. Edward Hall<sup>21</sup> has shown how the setting of different kinds of distances are at work both in the animal and in the human world. 'Personal distance' is said to be the distance that is commonly adopted between one



individual animal and another; a familiar example of this is the spacing of birds on a telephone wire. 'Intimate distance' is said to be the space held between mates or between parents and their young, significant examples of which can be found among birds and apes. By 'social distance' is meant that distance which separates different members of a group from one another in virtue of the different roles that they occupy. A minimum need for private space is essential for an animal's survival. If the animal's ability to smell, court etc. are hindered by overcrowding, they might react in various ways to reduce the overcrowding. They might kill each other or commit suicides, as found with rabbits and lemmings.<sup>22</sup> These studies suggest that non-human animals safeguard their privacy in different ways.

Let us now try to bring the threads of our previous discussion together and consider in what sense we can speak of animal behaviour as moral. Many non-human animals, as we have seen, do behave in ways that suggest morality in the sense that had human beings behaved in that way, that behaviour would have been explained in moral language. The points we have discussed about animal intelligence, communication, self-awareness, altruistic behaviour, privacy etc. suggest that non-human animals tend to react to different situations in much the same way as morally good human beings would. But there seems to be a difference between 'moral' behaviour on the part of non-human animals, and 'moral' behaviour on the part of human beings. The difference is that non-human animals do not draw out any principles of action from their own actions. They can hardly be said to moralize about themselves, or to be capable of constructing an elaborate system of moral concepts. But this inability to work out a conceptual framework of moral behaviour does not mean that they are incapable of responding morally to different situations. The ability to *conceptualize* morally is distinct from



the ability to *respond* morally, and a lack of the former does not imply a lack of the latter. If non-human animals care for their own offsprings as well as for the offsprings of others, have respect for figures of authority, safeguard their own privacy, refuse to fight if the opponent submits, and so on, it cannot plausibly be maintained that moral behaviour is completely unknown to them.

Department of Philosophy

KOYELI GHOSH - DASTIDAR

Burdwan University

Burdwan - 713104.

(W. B.)

#### NOTES

1. Stephen L. Clark; *The Nature of the Beast*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984), p. 20.
2. *Ibid*, p. 22.
3. *Ibid*, p. 23.
4. R. Needham; *Belief, Language and Experience* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1972)
5. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
6. M. Lindauer; *Communication Among Social Bees* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971).
7. K. Lorenz and P. Leyhausen; *Motivation of Human and Animal Behaviour* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1973).
8. W. Etkin and D. G. Freedman; *Social Behaviour from Fish to Man* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967).
9. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
10. J. Cherfas, 'Voices in the Wilderness', *New Scientist*, 86, 1980 (as quoted in Clark).



11. Clark, *op. cit.*, p 51.
12. *New Scientist*, ( 30th June, 1977 ).
13. V. Reynolds, *The Apes* ( Cassell. London, 1967 ).
14. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
15. *Ibid*, p. 58.
16. Mary Midgley; *Beast and Man* ( Methuen, London, 1980 ), p. 134.
17. Simone De Beauvoir; *The Second Sex* ( Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1983 p. 52.
18. Alan F. Westin, *Privacy and Freedom* ( The Bodley Head, London, 1970 ), p. 8.
19. R. Ardrey; *The Territorial Imperative* ( New York, 1966 ); E. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* ( New York, 1966 ),
20. Roger Brown and Richard J. Herrnstein, *Psychology* ( Methuen, London, 1975 ) pp. 225-226.
21. E. Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-37, 39-70, 120.
22. *Ibid*, p. 17.



October 1989

## BERKELEY KICKING HIS OWN STONES

The title of this paper alludes, of course, to a celebrated refutation of George Berkeley's immaterialism. A decade after Berkeley's death, James Boswell and Samuel Johnson "stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that every thing in the universe is merely ideal. "I observed", wrote Boswell, "that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it., - 'I refute it thus.'"<sup>1</sup>

Berkeley unwittingly produced this refutation-by-recalcitrance in his own life efforts. That is the thesis of this paper. But current academic propriety frowns on making this sort of claim. We are admonished, when evaluating a philosopher's doctrine, not to give biographical facts testificatory weight.

What justifies the propriety forbidding our use of biography for philosophical criticism?

The received view is that a philosopher's life story is background material safely ignored or relegated to the introduction. Biography, showing *sources* of a philosopher's theories, may illuminate his motives or meanings, but not the merits of the very theories. To use biography in criticism is to commit the genetic or *ad hominem* fallacies. Aristotle's passion for biology is

Received : 9-5-88



not evidence that the teleology of his physics is misguided, only an impetus toward that teleology. When we note that John Locke trained as a physician, we ease our recognition that he wanted to treat the disorders of the understanding, and that there is an analogy between his analytic-synthetic approach and the medical method taught at the University of Padua; but the biographical fact of his medical training tells us nothing about the *soundness* of his investigative method or his pathology of the understanding. And knowing that Spinoza ground lenses tells us nothing about anything — except that he was up against it in a world that provides free meals at the Prytaneum for its victorious athletes but not its philosophers.

But why the restriction of biography to genetic inquiries? A doctrine proposed by a living person is meant to have a future. What gave rise to the present author's doctrine on the critical use of biography is less important than how he is going to justify it to you, the reader, and apply it to Berkeley.

We think it is enough to note what led up to the classic works of Berkeley's youth, and then to stop. So we settle for a portrait of a stunted human being: "the good bishop." We thereby fail to see the relation Berkeley's philosophical ideas had to his personal growth, and this leaves us with an impoverished notion of philosophy. Is philosophy not supposed to affect our lives? This means more than its being an "influence" on others. Plato's claim in the *Meno* that knowledge and true opinion are equally good guides to correct action is based on the assumption that our ideas do guide our action. This suggests that our lives offer a way of putting our philosophical convictions to the test.

Berkeley invites this approach in two ways. First, whereas Locke examined knowledge primarily in the light of its source ("original"), Berkeley turned to its future applications. He did this through a theory of meaning that Charles Sanders Peirce



revived in 1978 in "How to Make Our Ideas Clear." William James gave a famous lecture twenty years later in which he credited Peirce's essay with inaugurating American pragmatism. It is a fitting coincidence that James delivered his lecture at the University of California in the city named after Berkeley, for Peirce himself claimed only to have formulated a method that Berkeley had already used.

What does it mean, asked Berkeley, to say that the earth moves? It means "that if we were placed in such and such circumstances, and such or such a position and distance, both from the earth and sun, we should perceive the former to move among the choir of planets, and appearing in all respects like one of them..."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps likewise Berkeley's declaration that there is no material substance could be paraphrased into conditionals, the antecedents of which Berkeley realized in his life — without their predicted consequents. "If Berkeley were to undertake such and such a project, then he should not have the unmediated perception of material recalcitrance." But (the thesis of this paper) he did have that experience, as did Dr Johnson when he kicked the stone

A second way that Berkeley invites testificatory use of his biography is in his precociousness. He was in his early twenties when he came to his immaterialism, and we know little about his earlier years. He died at 67. Either we accept the propriety of dismissing the bulk of his life as irrelevant to his philosophy, or, as is here proposed, we find a less fashionable way of using the biography to study the philosophy.

At least three difficulties now arise. For one thing, Peirce had extended his pragmatic method to encompass a theory of meaning, but he balked at James' pragmatic theory of truth. In



making the true the "expedient," James did not adequately distinguish the logical consequences of a proposition from the psychological results of believing it. The claim that a belief is true because holding it is emotionally satisfying is now generally discredited. This paper seems to be trying to revive just that claim.

Also, it seems to be supposing that a metaphysical theory is subject to the same sort of empirical confirmation—or at least disconfirmation—as a theory in the physical sciences. But long ago Hume and Kant savaged that supposition. The metaphysical doctrine of the non-existence of matter cannot be falsified, in just the same way as the scientific doctrine of the non-existence of the earth's motion.

Moreover, Samuel Johnson's refutation, as an argument of demonstration, is open to more than one interpretation. When he kicked the stone, did Dr. Johnson merely perceive some "tangible ideas", failing thereby to touch Berkeley's theory? Or did he strike deeper? Not everyone will see what Johnson showed as a token of the same type. Modes of perception vary. It seems especially presumptuous to offer an interpretation of meaning of a man's life.

These three concerns do not constitute a fatal objection to the present undertaking, only a risk: the risk of reducing truth to the merely subjective, metaphysical statements to the purely empirical, a life to a single interpretation. For there is a risk on the other side: the risk of not making allowance for the discovery of truths about life from living it, for the relevance of the actual world to our metaphysics, for the need to make sense of a human life as a whole. Sometimes we do learn lessons from life's experiences. Sometimes we do modify our outlook on reality when confronted with actuality. Sometimes we do see a particular



life as noble or wasted, rewarding or futile, tragic or comic — and any life is inevitably paradoxical.

We learn most from our failures. The project of this paper could fail if it were flawed in any or all of three ways. First, the doctrine guiding it might be false, for biography may not have the use here claimed for it. (For the sake of simplicity, assume the project to be guided by only one doctrine.) Secondly, even supposing the doctrine to be correct, it might be applied here in the wrong counterfactual conditional. The claim is that if one were to examine how Berkeley failed in such and such projects of his own, then one should apprehend evidence for refuting his immaterialism; but this paper may be mistaken about the facts or anticipated results. Finally, even granting that both the doctrine and its conceived application are flawless, the present author might be inept in getting the project under way—not the first time that someone has bungled when setting up a project suitable to a worthy doctrine. Yet failure need not depend on doctrinal error or misapplication, or on ineptitude. One can fail through no fault of his own. He may be just up against it.

Some doctrines—including metaphysical doctrines such as immaterialism—guide action only quite generally. Intermediate doctrines must then specify the project. This does not preclude, however, the action being a test of the more general doctrine.

Nor does an ill-conceived or poorly implemented project preclude a successful outcome. Indeed, easy success casts doubt upon the value of the project.

Berkeley's life as a whole was a shining triumph, yet it was nothing if not a series of failures. Consider, for example, his first major public undertaking, which was to convince the world of the truth of immaterialism. Though artfully presented, the doctrine was not generally well received. Alfred



North Whitehead has pointed out that, although it would be absurd to say that Berkeley was uninfluential during the eighteenth century, "all the same he failed to affect the main stream of scientific thought. It flowed on as if he had never written."<sup>3</sup>

In his private life, Berkeley fared no better when his first love spurned him. She was a younger woman named Anne Donnellan, whose father, Chief Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland, had died when she was a child. Her widowed mother had remarried, taking as her husband the younger brother of Berkeley's friend and patron Sir John Percival. When Berkeley proposed marriage to Anne Donnellan, all the signs were favourable : their equal circumstances, the consent of their friends, and her good opinion of him. We can only conjecture why she proved recalcitrant and turned him down. In any event, Berkeley had to look elsewhere for a wife.

Berkeley's second major public venture was to found a college in Bermuda. The proposal gained royal approval, a number of subscribers, and the promise of 20,000 pounds from the English Parliament. In 1728 Berkeley took his bride to America to await payment of the funds—in vain, thanks to Robert Walpole. Berkeley was indeed prophetic in the heliotropism of his line, "Westward the course of empire takes its way." Before issuing his proposal, however, he had not done all his homework on the material circumstances in America. Moreover, he slipped up in its execution, as when he neglected to require from Parliament a payment deadline. Still, without Berkeley's errors, the prime minister might have found a way to resist.

Berkeley managed not to make any significant mistakes in a third major public venture, a proposal for a national bank of Ireland. He showed remarkable insight in his anti-mercantilist



theory that monetary tokens are essentially counters of credit for promoting industry. He had done his homework as well—both in Rhode Island, where paper currency was used, and in Ireland, where he knew the material conditions of the populace and the repressive policies of the English government.

At this time he had done nearly everything humanly possible to actualize his scheme. He introduced his ideas for the bank in an engaging work called *The Querist*, which he published (in both Ireland and England) in three parts over a period of three years. Berkeley's rhetorical queries offered Ireland a most reasonable way out of its economic woes. Then, in several Dublin newspapers, he published an open "Letter on the Project of a National Bank," which he revised and republished with extracts from *The Querist* of the queries relating to the Bank. Finally in the fall of 1737, he went to Dublin from his diocese of Cloyne to sit in the House of Lords, where he could make his case personally.

Berkeley's sweetness and light notwithstanding, the Irish politicians at the Parliament House remained intractable. Suspecting only the worst, they would have nothing to do with the bank proposal Berkeley was just plain up against it. In rebounding from his stone, he broke a resolve recorded in the notebooks of his early twenties: "N. B. to rein in y<sup>r</sup> Satyrical Nature."<sup>4</sup> He wrote down a bitterly satirical series of queries under the title *The Irish Patriot, or Queries upon Queries*. Fortunately for his reputation, he had the good sense to leave the piece unpublished.

An instructive irony emerges from a chronological listing of the major public projects of this "master of the immaterial"<sup>5</sup>. The interests that began with philosophy became successively more material as he moved to education, then to economics, and finally to medicine. Yet even when recounting the medicinal



benefits of tar water in *Siris* (1744), he stuck to his early lofty thoughts of the spiritual ordering of the universe. The question is whether he had learned by then to temper that original vision with acknowledgement of the powers of material actuality.

Berkeley's genius lay in his ability to isolate — even wallow in — the sheer sensuousness of the world, and then give it semiotic status. He had an architect's eye. In 1713, on his first visit to London, he could gaze upon the just-completed St. Paul's Cathedral with an appreciation of its purely visual majesty. (In a *Guardian* essay written at that time, he compared the freethinker to a fly on a column of St. Paul's, unable to see the beauty of the whole.) This did not diminish his appreciation of the practical lesson experience had taught him: how to interpret the purely visual features of St. Paul's tactually. Though his starting point was perception in what Whitehead called the "mode of presentational immediacy," he could readily shift from an aesthetic to a pragmatic stance by using what was immediately given as a sign of what was not. In Peirce's terminology, he conceived things under the categories of both Firstness (quality, suchness) and Thirdness (mediation, signhood).

How much richer even had been Locke's experience of St. Paul's, which lay in ruins when he moved from Oxford to London just after the Great Fire. Locke beheld the effort that the "underlabourers" and "masterbuilders" were putting into the realization of Christopher Wren's grand design for a new cathedral. Locke's "idea" of solidity (impenetrability), which Locke got by pressing a football or a flint between his hands, is less differentiated than any of Berkeley's "ideas." Berkeley separated out of Locke's "simple ideas of sensation" objects of purely sensuous perception, and then distinguished the immediate from any mediate object of such perception. And, as a modern-day Heraclitus, Berkeley denied "matter" insofar as it was a



product of the abstractionist mentality of the scientist. In this he was indeed on the side of common sense. Where he betrayed common sense was in his reduction of philosophically acceptable matter to the objects of *sensuous* perception. Common sense demands that our unmediated perception sometimes be interactive. When Locke compressed his football, he was perceiving not just sensuously as a spectator but in a viseral way as an agent — in Whitehead's "mode of causal efficacy." In the latter mode, he was apprehending actuality under Peirce's category of Secondness (thisness, upagainstness). So was Dr. Johnson in kicking his stone. And — if we follow Aristotle in extending the notion of materiality beyond the merely corporeal — so was Berkeley in contending before that gang at the Irish Parliament House. Because the objects of sensuous perception are inert, and because Berkeley restricted unmediated perception to that mode, Berkeley deprived material actuality of the "clout" that common sense has always found in it.

Berkeley liked to use written discourse as a model for the world. God is the Author of the Book of Nature. Locke also had theoretical recourse to the book model. In denying innate knowledge, Locke had noted how the ink had to be brought to the blank page; the world imprints ideas upon the mind by impact. Moreover, the ink is imprinted in the form of characters; ideas are signs, as they were for Berkeley. But Berkeley's interest in the "impressions" did not go beyond their qualitative form and semiotic use. In fastening on the sign types in his model, Berkeley chose to note only the *presence* of the inked sign tokens without concerning himself with what had gone into their actual *production*. Berkeley thought not of the laborious process of handwriting or printing, but of the intended characters and their linguistic meaning.



Ironically, this forerunner of pragmatism and operationalism had overlooked the philosophical significance of sweat—which finds even biblical significance in God's punishment of Adam. The Greek tradition of snootiness toward earned perspiration began with the Pythagorean Story of the Three Lives, or Parable of the Festival. Of the three types attending the Olympic Games—the vendors, the competitors, and the spectators—only the spectators, who are the philosophers in life, lead a life that is not slavish. Or so Pythagoras taught. And Plato concurred, ensconcing the spectator of all time and existence above the mundane. Yet even in Plato's idealism, in which a mythical Demiurge imposes the Forms on the Receptacle, the Receptacle proves recalcitrant. But it is in Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes that we find the most felicitous opposition to the form of a thing: the "lumber" out of which it is made. The formalist tradition needed to grant that we live in a world in which we do not just commune with other minds at the intellectual level, but we also interact with our material surroundings at the gut level. When Berkeley failed to acknowledge this point, common sense lost patience with the whole of his scheme and tagged it as visionary.

Yet the failures cited from Berkeley's life all seem to portray defeat not by material circumstances but by other minds: the readers of his philosophy (or at least those to whom his immaterialism was reported), his first love, the prime minister, and the Dublin politicians. Was it not, then, spiritual forces that he was ultimately up against?

Ultimately, perhaps, but not directly. Berkeley's theory of the knowledge of other minds will not accommodate their power being perceived without mediation. According to Berkeley, one infers by reason—on the basis of analogy with myself—the existence or nature of another mind from its effects, which are all one can perceive directly. Moreover, the objects of sensuous percep-



tion that one does know directly are "ideas" that, being no more than what they are perceived to be, are inert because one perceives no power in them. Therefore, either no power is directly given in perception, or there is non-sensuous perception, brutish as that may be. A claim of this paper is that we do directly feel power—most obviously in conjunction with our tactual experiences, but the world also grates or impinges on us with its blaring stereos and glaring lights, and occasionally it reeks of garlic and gasoline. What gets to us is not the heat, as they say, but the humidity : not stench as a sensory quality, but its potency.

The refutation—by-recalcitrance in this paper is not meant then, to be dismissive—as no doubt Dr. Johnson intended it—but corrective. Berkeley may have been right to maintain that real power is spiritual. But he did not allow that the actual potency of unthinking things as something other is a perceptual given. An example of direct apprehension of material recalcitrance that we might have drawn from Berkeley's life was his awareness, time and again, of being inhibited by his "habitual cholic" or "the gout" or some "disorder in the head". Behind his suffering may have been a spiritual force, perhaps offering him a lesson, just as behind the absence of the promised 20,000 pounds lurked Walpole's scheming. But it was the actual material resources—or lack thereof—that he had to cope with directly. In order to feel the pangs of hunger, we do not have to believe that someone is withholding food from us. Using the natural as a paradigm, we may, however, define what we are up against conventionally, or socially, as when we speak metaphorically of being between a rock and a hard place. In this paper the citations from Berkeley's life have been of the latter sort, but that is compatible with the wish that he had been a lens grinder.

The world is not to be got around. There is no free lunch, and ready success arouses our suspicions. At the same time that



his bank project was going down to humiliating defeat, Berkeley found astonishing ease in persecuting a group of Dublin blasphemers who called themselves Blasters. From our vantage point, it is hardly to Berkeley's credit that he was so ardent a foe of Blasters. Indeed, his experience in the colony of Rhode Island, where blasphemy was not a punishable offence, might have convinced him of the advantages of the separation of church and state. But he was, after all, up against his holding preferment in the established Church of Ireland. In reality, the victory over Blasters was but a sop thrown to the Lords Spiritual, who had recently undergone a defeat regarding payment to the clergy of the tithe of agistment (for pasturage of dry and barren cattle), and who were currently threatened with a mortmain bill (designed to restrain) legacies of lands or money for religious uses). Again, Berkeley achieved temporary celebrity with tar water, but his hopes for its medical potency had slender justification. While we are still living, it is realistic to expect recalcitrance everywhere but in our dreams. And, though it can contribute to our failures, without it we can have no genuine successes. When the degree of difficulty is negligible, we may well heed the concluding remark of Spinoza's *Ethics*, that "all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare."

The question arises whether Berkeley ever learned to temper his original view. Did he finally admit that the natural order that invites spiritual interpretation manifests directly an efficacy of its own? Sometime we might look into his last major work, *Siris*, to see how he used the notion of an "inferior instrumental or physical cause" to reconcile the apparent medicinal efficacy of tar water with an ultimately spiritual reality. He had so scripted his life that at last he had to address such a problem at length. Yet, the notion of Berkeley championing tar water as a possible panacea has brought smiles to many a face, including



that of his old flame, Anne Dennellan. And so much of the science in *Siris* is outdated, and the aura so Neoplatonic and Hermetic, that its quaintness puts us off. Still, Berkeley's discovery of tar water may have been just the breakthrough he needed to link the actual to the real, the recalcitrant to the refulgent.

This paper began by challenging an academic propriety. It concludes by embracing some linguistic proprieties. When we are in the midst of a discourse in the material mode, we should not shift abruptly to the spiritual. In Southern California, where occasional Santa Ana winds make the wooden shake shingles that are popular there an awesome fire hazard, a roofer's conversation with a potential customer came to a sudden standstill when his argument that a good reason for not reroofing with wood is that wood burns was met with the statement that God will provide. Berkeley's youthful immaterialism required us to *think* that a spirit heats, but bowed to the linguistic propriety of *saying* that fire heats — just as we should say that the sun rises even though we Copernicans know better than to think so. Even if spiritual agency is ultimate, a claim of this paper is that fire does heat; and the question is whether Berkeley finally came to see that there is an important truth after all in the received opinion that upholds the propriety of speaking this way. The world and the flesh are not to be repudiated. The realm of matter makes its own demands, whatever its relation to the realm of spirit. But language gives Berkeley more support than he realized. The failures Berkeley endured arose in a material setting from quite natural causes. Yet there is no linguistic impropriety in our using the spiritual mode when speaking of those failures. In choosing to kick the stones he did, the participant—not merely the spectator or even the interpreter — let life offer him a chance to learn of a flaw in his immaterialism, and to grow as a human



being. Someone once wisely observed that we humans do not have the maturity to learn from joy; we must learn from our suffering.

Department of Philosophy  
California State University  
P. O. Box 14807  
Long Beach, California 90803  
U. S. A.

WILLIAM H. MCGOWAN

### NOTES

1. James Boswell; *The Life of Samuel, Johnson*, 2 vols. (London : J. M. Dent, 1906 ), vol. I, p. 292.
2. George Berkeley; *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, ed. Kenneth P. Winkler (Indianapolis : Hackett Publishing Company, 1982 ), sect. 58, p. 47.
3. Alfred North Whitehead; *Science and the Modern World* ( New York : The New American Library, 1948 ), p. 67.
4. George Berkeley; *Philosophical Commentaries*, ed. George H. Thomas ( Alliance, Ohio : Mount Union College, 1976 ), entry 634, p. 82.
5. Frank Muhly, Jr. ( writer and producer ), dialogue from the public television film *The Dean of Thin Air* ( Providence, R. I. : WSBE TV, 1984 ).



## ON GETTIER'S NOTIONS OF KNOWLEDGE AND JUSTIFICATION

### *Introduction*

It is generally accepted that the sufficient condition for the proposition 'S knows P' is the set N of its following necessary conditions.

- (i) S believes P.
- (ii) P is a justified belief of S.
- (iii) P is true.

If one is to refute this claim then he may, as Gettier claims to have done (Edmund L. Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis*, Vol. 23. Blackwell, 1963), present at least one imaginary situation in which all three conditions in N are fulfilled but yet it is false that 'S knows P'. This procedure, however, presupposes that we have in our mind some preconceived criteria, (other than those conditions in N), the fulfilment of which enable us to determine the truth of the proposition 'S knows P'.

Thus either to agree or to disagree with Gettier, we have to understand why, inspite of the fact that the so-called sufficient condition for Smith's knowing (e) in case I (or Smith's knowing (h) in case II) was fulfilled, Gettier does not believe that the proposition 'Smith knows (e)' (or 'Smith knows (h)' in case II) is true.

Received : 20-2-88



Though Gettier has never been explicit on this point, but at the end of his description of case I, he attempts to explain this in the following way—

‘Smith does not know that (e) is true, for (e) is true in virtue of number of coins in Smith’s pocket, while Smith does not know how many coins are there in Smith’s pocket and bases his belief in (e) on a count of the coins in Jones’s pocket whom he falsely believes to be the man who will get the job’.<sup>1</sup>

A careful analysis of this statement reveals that according to Gettier there are two reasons why one should believe that ‘Smith does not know (e)’ and those are —

(A) ‘Smith does not know that (e) is true; for (e) is true in virtue of number of coins in Smith’s pocket while Smith does not know how many coins are there in Smith’s pocket...’

(B) ‘Smith does not know that (e) is true; for ... Smith ... bases his belief in (e) on a count of coins in Jones’s pocket, whom he falsely believes to be the man who will get the job’.

During the course of subsequent discussion it will become clear that the proposition (A) is related to Gettier’s notion of some one’s knowing a disjunctive proposition, while the proposition (B) is related to Gettier’s notion of justification. None of these two notions, it will be shown, is acceptable, implying thereby that neither (A) nor (B) is acceptable.

## A. GETTIER’S NOTION OF KNOWING : A DISJUNCTIVE PROPOSITION

1. ANALYSIS OF CASE I : Let us first focus our attention on the proposition (A) quoted above.

Though Gettier never tells us about what he really means by some proposition being true ‘in virtue of’ something else, but still this gives us some idea about,



(1) What proposition Gettier wants to express by the sentence, '(e) is true', and

(2) What proposition, Gettier thinks Smith to believe when Gettier says that 'Smith believes that (e) is true'. From the arguments presented by Gettier which has been quoted above, we see that according to him,

(a) IF, either '(e) is true in virtue of number of coins in Smith's pocket' OR '(e) is true in virtue of number of coins in Jones's pocket' THEN '(c) is true'.

(b) IF '(e) is true' THEN either '(e) is true in virtue of number of coins in Smith's pocket' OR '(e) is true in virtue of number of coins in Jones's pocket.'

Now let us call the first one of the two disjuncts in (a) (or (b)) the 'Gettier's (e)' or simply G (e) and the second one the 'Smith's (e)' or S (e).

Hence from (a) and (b) we get that, according to Gettier, '(e) is true' IFF 'either G (e) OR S (e)' or we may say according to Gettier, when he says '(e) is true' he means 'either G (e) or S (e)', i.e. to him.

'(e) is true'  $\equiv$  G (e)  $\vee$  S (e).

Where  $\vee$  stands for 'OR' (in the exclusive sense); for G (e) and S (e) can not both be true.

Now, I shall show that in relation to case I, Gettier was not able to show that Smith fulfilled the sufficient condition for knowing either G (e) or S (e) or (e).

**1.1 SUFFICIENT CONDITION FOR THE PROPOSITION**  
'Smith knows S (e)': Gettier writes, 'Smith bases his belief in (e) on a count of coins in Jones's pocket'. This means that Smith believes that '(e) is true in virtue of the number of coins in Jones's pocket' hence he believes in S (e). But Gettier



by virtue of believing that  $G(e)$  is true, believes that  $S(e)$  is false. Hence Gettier believes that.

- i) Smith believes  $S(e)$
  - ii) Smith is justified to believe  $S(e)$
- But iii)  $S(e)$  is false

Hence, Gettier believes that the sufficient condition for the proposition 'Smith knows  $S(e)$ ' was not fulfilled.

**1.2 SUFFICIENT CONDITION FOR THE PROPOSITION 'Smith knows  $G(e)$ ':** Now, since Gettier believes that 'Smith believes that  $S(e)$  is true', therefore Smith does not believe that  $G(e)$  is true; for  $G(e)$  and  $S(e)$  can not both be true, i.e.  $S(e) \rightarrow \neg G(e)$  or if Smith does not see this entailment and believes that  $G(e)$  is true, even in that case  $G(e)$  is not his justified belief, since he does not have any evidence for  $G(e)$ . Hence,

- either i) Smith does not believe  $G(e)$
  - ii) Smith is not justified to believe  $G(e)$
  - iii)  $G(e)$  is true
- or
- i) Smith believes  $G(e)$
  - But ii) Smith is not justified to believe  $G(e)$
  - iii)  $G(e)$  is true.

In either of the two possibilities the sufficient condition for the proposition 'Smith knows  $G(e)$ ' is not fulfilled.

**1.3 SUFFICIENT CONDITION FOR THE PROPOSITION 'Smith knows  $(e)$ ':** Consider the situation that Smith sees the two entailments  $(S(e) \rightarrow \neg G(e))$  and  $((S(e) \wedge \neg G(e)) \rightarrow (S(e) \vee G(e)))$ . Now since he is justified to believe  $S(e)$ , he is justified to believe  $\neg G(e)$  and hence  $(S(e) \vee G(e))$  on the ground of  $S(e)$  for which he has strong evidence. So, if he really believes  $(S(e) \vee G(e))$  then.



- i) Smith believes that '(e) is true',
- ii) Smith is justified to believe that '(e) is true',
- iii) '(e) is true'

and the sufficient condition for the proposition 'Smith knows (e)' is fulfilled. As regards this situation, I claim, as I shall argue (in Sec.3), that Gettier's reasoning (A) does not establish that 'Smith does not know (e)'.

If, however, Smith believes that (e) is true but does not see the two entailments stated above then,

- i) Smith believes that (e) is true.
- ii) Smith is not justified to believe that (e) is true.
- iii) (e) is true.

and the sufficient condition for the proposition 'Smith knows (e)' is not fulfilled.

2. ANALYSIS OF GETTIER'S CASE II: The problem related to the case II is a simpler one though this time Gettier is even more vague in saying why he thinks that 'Smith does not know (h)'. He only says 'imagine now that two further conditions hold. First, Jones does not own a Ford, but is at present driving a rented car. And secondly, by the sheerest coincidence, and entirely unknown to Smith, the place mentioned in proposition (h) happens really to be the place where Brown is. If these two conditions hold then Smith does not know that (h) is true'.

The proposition (h) is,

'Either Jones owns a Ford OR Brown is in Barcelona'

Now, if we concentrate our attention particularly on the sentence 'unknown to Smith, the place mentioned in (h) happens really to be the place where Brown is', we can guess, his argument in favour of his claim that 'Smith does not know (h)' might be something like this—



Smith does not know (h), for ' (h) is true in virtue of Brown being in Barcelona ' and Smith falsely believes that ' (h) is true in virtue of Jones having a Ford '.

Thus as before, for Gettier, the proposition ' (h) is true ' is logically equivalent to ' G (h) or S (h) ' i. e.

' (h) is true '  $\equiv$  G (h)  $\vee$  S (h) (Notice that '  $\vee$  ' is an inclusive ' or ')

Hence the possible reason that Gettier might present to support his statement that ' Smith does not know (h) ' might be that, Smith does not know that ' (h) is true ', because he does not know in virtue of which of the two disjuncts, G (h) and S (h), being true, (h) is true. Hence he would claim that ' Smith knows that S (h) is true ', or that if Smith does not know G (h) and he also does not know S (h) then he does not know (h).

I will prove that this is not true. But before going to prove it we introduce the abbreviation ' Sk ' for ' Smith knows that '.

Now it is obvious that

$\neg (Sk (G (h) \vee S (h)) \rightarrow Sk G (h)) \dots \dots \dots (a)$   
because, one may know that ' either G (h) or S (h) is true ' not knowing that ' G (h) is true '. For example, say, a black and a white cock are participating in a cock-fight. Somebody who witnesses it might know from his past experience that at least one of them (or possibly both) will die. Hence he knows that ' either the black cock will die or the white cock will die ', but that does not imply that he knows that ' the black will die '. Similarly, he also does not know that ' the white cock will die '.

Therefore we also have

$\neg ((Sk (G (h) \vee S (h)) \rightarrow Sk (h)) \dots \dots \dots (b)$   
Now (a) and (b)



implies  $\neg ( (Sk (G (h) S (h) ) \rightarrow SK G (h) \wedge \neg$   
 $( (Sk (G (h) \vee S (h) \rightarrow SK S (h) )$

implies  $(Sk (G (h) \vee S (h) ) \wedge \neg SK G (h) ) \wedge (Sk$   
 $(G (h) \vee S (h) ) \wedge \neg SK S (h)$

implies  $(Sk (G (h) S (h) \wedge \neg SK G (h) \wedge \neg Sk S (h))$

implies  $\neg ( (\neg Sk G (h) \wedge \neg Sk S (h)) \rightarrow \neg Sk (G (h)$   
 $\vee S (h) ) )$

and this is our desired result, which means that 'Smith knows  
 neither  $G(h)$  nor  $S(h)$ ' does not mean that 'Smith does not  
 know either  $G(h)$  or  $S(h)$ '.

Hence, there is nothing impossible if 'Smith knows  $(h)$ ' but  
 the propositions that 'Smith knows that Jones owns a Ford' and  
 'Smith knows that Brown is in Barcelona', are both false

3. FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE CASE I ; Now  
 we consider the situation that (1) Smith believes  $(e)$ , and as he  
 sees the entailment from  $S(e)$  (which he is justified to believe  
 on the ground of some strong evidence) to  $(e)$ , (2) he is justi-  
 fied to believe  $(e)$  (on the ground of  $S(e)$  and (3)  $(e)$  is true.

Even though these conditions are fulfilled, Gettier does not  
 believe that 'Smith knows  $(e)$ ', because, (though he does not  
 tell us explicitly), Smith does not know that  $(e)$  is true in virtue  
 of  $G(e)$  and since he falsely believes  $S(e)$  to be true, i.e. since  
 he believes that  $(e)$  is true in virtue of  $S(e)$ , which is a false  
 proposition, he does not also know  $S(e)$ . Hence, 'Smith does  
 not know  $S(e)$ ' and 'he does not know  $G(e)$ '. Therefore  
 'Smith does not know  $(e)$ '.

So, in our abbreviation, Gettier's reasoning is,

$(\neg Sk S (e) \wedge \neg Sk G (e)) \rightarrow \neg Sk (S (e) \vee G (e) )$ .

To prove that this is false we start as before from the two  
 premises that.



$$\neg (\text{Sk} (S (e) \vee G (e)) \rightarrow \text{SK} S (e))$$

$$\text{And } \neg (\text{Sk} (S (e) \vee G (e)) \rightarrow \text{SK} G (e))$$

These two premises jointly imply that

$$\neg (\text{Sk} (S (e) \vee G (e)) \rightarrow \text{SK} S (e)) \wedge \neg (\text{Sk} (S (e) \vee G (e)) \rightarrow \text{SK} G (e))$$

$$\text{implies } (\neg \text{SK} S (e) \wedge \neg \text{SK} G (e)) \wedge \text{Sk} (S (e) \vee G (e))$$

$$\text{implies } \neg ((\neg \text{SK} S (e) \wedge \neg \text{SK} G (e)) \rightarrow \neg \text{Sk} (S (e) \vee G (e)))$$

and this falsifies Gettier's reasoning (or intuition) that if one does not know either of the two disjuncts of a disjunctive proposition then he can not know the disjunctive proposition.

Hence, when the conditions given at the beginning of this section are fulfilled then in that case Gettier's reasoning does not establish his claim that it is false that 'Smith knows (e)'

In support of my claim, I will site two examples,

(a) One knows that

$$\sqrt[8]{1687542} > 6 \vee \sqrt[8]{1687542} \leq 6$$

does not mean that either 'he knows that  $\sqrt[8]{1687542} > 6$ , or he knows  $\sqrt[8]{1687542} \leq 6$ . In fact he may even wrongly believe one of them to be true and may believe the proposition in question to be true in virtue of that false proposition; but that does not alter the truth of the proposition that he knows that  $\sqrt[8]{1687542} > 6 \vee \sqrt[8]{1687542} \leq 6$ .

(b) Suppose that a coin is going to be tossed. Then 'I know that either head will come up or tail will come up'. But still neither of the two propositions that 'I know that the head will come up' and 'I know that the tail will come up' is true. Even I may wrongly believe one of them, but that does not mean that



the proposition that 'I know that either head will come up or tail will come up' is not true.

## B. GETTIER'S NOTION OF JUSTIFICATION

1. TWO SENSES OF JUSTIFICATION: The two example cases may be capable enough to falsify Gettier's contention in (A); but one may not accept them as being exactly similar to Gettier cases on the ground of Gettier's contention in (B). The reasoning may be as follows -

In none of the two example cases given here the subject depends for his knowledge of the (disjunctive) proposition on his belief in one of the two disjuncts: In fact, here in each case, the subject had other justifications for believing the (disjunctive) proposition. For each of the two Gettier cases, on the other hand, the subject depends (or 'bases his belief,' as Gettier says) for knowing the (disjunctive) proposition on one of its disjuncts which is false. Thus Gettier's reasoning in (B) is like this—

Smith does not know that  $G(e) \vee S(e)$ ; for he bases his belief in  $G(e) \vee S(e)$  on the ground of  $S(e)$  which is false.

Now let us ask, what, according to Gettier, is wrong in it? If he means that it is not *permissible* for Smith to base his belief in  $G(e) \vee S(e)$  on the ground of a false proposition then how can he (Gettier) say that Smith is *justified* to believe  $G(e) \vee S(e)$  on the ground of  $S(e)$ ? Also notice that if according to Gettier Smith can not base his belief in (e) on the ground of  $S(e)$  for the reason that  $S(e)$  is false, then he can not also base his belief on (e) on the ground of (d) for the same reason that (d) is false.

This short argument conclusively shows that if Gettier believes that 'one may be justified in believing a proposition that is in fact false', then he can not establish his claim in (B).



The present author is thankful to Prof. Simon Blackburn (Editor, *Mind*, Oxford) for his comments in this context. He writes,

'You are quite right that it is a faelacy to argue  
 $(-K p \ \& \ -K q) \rightarrow -K (p \vee q)$

But Gettier cases do not, we think, depend upon that inference for their force. The reason why, in these cases, the subject does not know that A where A is disjunction  $p \vee q$  is that the cases are so set up that in some sense it is an accident that the subject is right. This is so inspite of his belief being justified (the trick is that belief in p. and hence in A is justified, but it is q that makes A true). I think you will see that when this point is added to, Gettier cases do retain their importance inspite of what you say'.

The 'trick' which he has referred to within perenthesees is the same as Gettier's reasoning in (A) and it has already been shown that this 'trick' does not establish Gettier's claim.

But Prof. Blackburn concludes the proposition 'Smith does not know (e)' on the ground that it is an accident that the subject was right ... inspite of his belief being justified'. It is, however, difficult to see how one could believe that a proposition is some one's justified belief and at the same time it is by accident that he is right. By 'a proposition being some one's justified belief' we generally mean that he has (and we too believe that he really has) certain good reasons for believing that the said proposition is true. But when we say that 'some one is right by accident in believing the proposition', we mean that he believes the proposition, the proposition is true, but he does not have any good reason for believing it. Though Prof. Blackburn did not explicitly write why he thinks that Smith is right by 'accident', but the obvious answer may be that Smith bases his belief in (e) on a count of coins in Jone's pocket whom he falsely believes to



be the man who will get the job. But it was Smith who got the job and by chance, had ten coins in his pocket – a fact that made (e) true. This reasoning is similar to that of Gettier in (B); but the proposition that ' (e) is Smith's justified belief ' is a conclusion forced by Gettier's claim that ' in that sense of justified in which S's being justified is a necessary condition of S's knowing that P, it is possible for a person to be justified in believing a proposition that is in fact false '.

However, the present author believes that the sense of justification which is commonly accepted is not the same as that of Gettier. In the subsequent section of this article we will first try to establish the basic difference between these two senses of justification and then try to understand why Gettier holds that a person may be justified in believing a proposition that is in fact false.

2. JUSTIFICATION IN THE STRICT SENSE : Strictly speaking, the proposition ' S is justified in believing P ' can not be true unless the following two necessary conditions are fulfilled :

- i) e is true
- ii) e is adequate evidence for p.

e is an adequate evidence for p if and only if e implies P. Otherwise it is inadequate or partial evidence.

It is obvious that if the above two conditions hold then it is impossible that P is false. Or, in other words, if some one is justified to believe that a proposition P is true then P can not be false.

Therefore, if in some case, e is true and p is false than e may be at the most a partial evidence for p.

3. JUSTIFICATION IN THE LOOSE SENSE : GETTIER'S NOTION : Philosophers have more or less accepted as a fact



that the proposition 'S is justified in believing P' is a necessary condition for the proposition 'S knows P'. Chisholm has substituted the former by the condition 'S has adequate evidence for P' and Ayer by 'S has right to be sure that P is true.' Gettier has considered all these conditions as equivalent.<sup>4</sup>

As we have already noted, Gettier's sense of justification permits the possibility for one's being justified in believing a proposition that is in fact false. This means that Gettier refers to that sense of justification in which the proposition 'S is justified in believing P' does not necessarily mean that S's evidence for P should be adequate. If this is his sense of justification then, as he does, he can not substitute 'has adequate evidence for' or has 'right to be sure that' for 'is justified in believing that'.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, in his case I, Gettier claims that Smith has 'strong evidence' for the proposition (d) and yet (d) is false, which means, that his sense of 'strong evidence' is not the same as that of our 'adequate evidence' or 'conclusive evidence' of Cohen and Nagel.<sup>6</sup> Hence, if adequacy of evidence is a necessary condition for some one's being justified in believing a proposition then clearly, Smith was not justified in believing (d). The same arguments may be applied to show that in Gettier's case II, Smith's belief in the proposition (f) was not justified either.

**4. KNOWLEDGE AND PARTIAL EVIDENCE :** If in accordance with the discussion in Sec. B2 we accept that the proposition 'S is justified in believing P' should imply that 'P is true' then the following conclusions are inevitable : (a) The couple of conditions (i) and (ii) at the beginning of this article would alone constitute the sufficient condition for the proposition 'S knows that P' and the condition (iii) i.e. 'P is true' is redundant.



(b) If P is either a future contingent proposition or a general proposition of empirical science then we can never be justified in believing that P is true.

I believe that both of the above two conclusions are right. Moreover, for the conclusion (a) I would like to add further that for the proposition 'S knows P' the condition (i) is redundant too; for if S sees the entailment from e to p and if he knows that e is true then how it can be possible that S still does not believe that P is true? Or, even if it may be possible to forcibly separate belief from justification, but that concept of justification must be strange and artificial, there is no reason why the proposition (ii), i.e. 'S is justified in believing P' should not be considered as the sufficient condition for the proposition 'S knows P'.

Now, in relation to the question of our being justified in believing a future contingent proposition let us consider the proposition 'Tomorrow will be a cold day'. Suppose that a meteorologist has strong evidence for this proposition. But, however, strong the evidence might be, it can never be adequate for concluding that the proposition in question is sure to be true. At least in principle, it is always possible to falsify such a proposition by some deliberate action; for example the proposition 'tomorrow will be a cold day' may be falsified by exploding an atom bomb at the place to which the proposition really refers.

As regards the general empirical propositions of science the situation is only slightly different. If 'P is false' implies that one can not be justified believing that P is true then we have to conclude that the propounders of all such scientific theories or laws as have been afterwards proved to be false had no justification in believing these theories or laws to be true.



But, that will be too strong a conclusion; for, though their evidences were not conclusive for the theories or the laws, but still it is true that they had 'some' justification or 'partial' evidence for believing that those theories or laws were 'certainly true'. Or the same thing can be stated in a different way as — they had conclusive evidence for believing that those laws or theories were possibly true'. Or we may say that they were justified in believing that those laws or theories were 'possibly true'.

In fact, the sentence 'P is possibly true' may be considered as another way of expressing the same proposition as 'there is some strong but partial evidence for P'. The proposition 'S is justified to believe that P is possibly true' may be interpreted as that 'S has strong but partial evidence for P'. Some one's having evidence (partial or conclusive) for a proposition is really his knowing that the proposition called evidence is true and that the evidence implies the proposition P.

Henceforth, in this article, for proposition  $x$ , we shall use the abbreviation ' $p(x)$ ' to mean that ' $x$  is possibly true'.

Now, I would like to mention the following point :

i) "S is justified to believe P" and "S is justified to believe  $p(P)$ " are different propositions.

ii) An evidence which is partial for P, may be conclusive for  $p(P)$ .

iii) If P is false then the proposition 'S is justified to believe P' is false. But the proposition 'S is justified to believe  $p(P)$ ' may be true even if P is false.

For most of the empirical propositions, as we have discussed earlier, the evidences are necessarily partial. What should be considered as the sufficient condition for the proposition 'S is



justified in believing P', is a separate issue; but it is definite that a necessary condition for the said proposition is that 'if e is true then P should be necessarily true. If this condition is not fulfilled, i.e. if e is true and yet P is found to be false then e may be, at the most, a partial evidence for P.

However, the fact that we do not have conclusive evidence for every proposition, can not be considered as a problem to be solved, for, in principle, we can not solve it. It is a reality, an unsurmountable limitation imposed by nature on our possibility of knowing. We should accept it as a fact and give up all such attempts as to encompass some of our inevitable ignorances by artificially widening the scope of the term 'justification' and hence 'knowledge'. At least this will not transform our ignorance into knowledge. Therefore, it is desirable that our enunciation of the sufficient condition for the proposition 'S knows P' should be such that it should be necessarily false for such proposition P, as in principle, can never be known.

#### 4. FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF GETTIER CASES :

Both of the two Gettier cases are founded on the very assumption that some one is justified to believe that P is true does not imply that P is true. During the course of his presentation of case I he writes —

'... Suppose that Smith has strong evidence for the following conjunctive proposition :

d) Jones is the man who will get the job and Jones has ten coins in his pocket...

But imagine, further, that unknown to Smith, he himself, not Jones, will get the job.

And from Case II we get :

'Let us suppose that Smith has strong evidence for the following proposition :



f) Jones owns a Ford...

... But imagine now that ... Jones does not own a Ford.

The point is, we may 'imagine' that a proposition is true though, in fact, it may be false. But, if the phrases 'imagine further' and 'imagine now' have the same meaning as that of the phrase, 'it is true', then in his two cases Gettier's claims reduce to the following two statements -

for case I :

Smith has strong evidence for (d) and (d) is false.

and for Case II :

Smith has strong evidence for (f) and (f) is false.

Clearly then, the strong evidences referred to by Gettier in these cases may be only partial evidences and not conclusive ones. Therefore on the basis of those evidences Smith was neither justified to believe that '(d) is true' nor that '(f) is true'. But of course, he was justified to believe that 'p(d)' and 'p(f)'.

Therefore, for case I,  $p(d)$  entails  $p(e)$  i.e. 'it is possibly true that Jones is the man who will get the job and Jones has ten coins in his pocket', entails 'it is possibly true that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket'. If Smith sees this entailment then, on the ground of his partial evidence for (d) which is conclusive for  $p(d)$ , he is justified to believe  $p(e)$  and hence, in that case, he really knows  $p(e)$ . Here, I want to make it clear that though Smith's belief in (e) was right by 'accident', but the truth of the proposition that his belief in  $p(e)$  is right, does not depend on the rightness of his belief in (e). His belief in  $p(e)$  is right in virtue of his having strong evidence for (e), no matter whether his belief in (e) is right by accident or not.



**OBJECTIVITY OF JUSTIFICATION :** Another point should be mentioned in this context that 'S believes that he is justified to believe p' does not imply that 'S is justified to believe p'. In fact, by the latter statement we claim not only that S is satisfied with his own reasonings for p, but also that it is true that his reasonings are logically sound. Suppose, S claims that he is justified in believing the proposition that :

- a) Tomorrow will be a rainy day, on the ground of the evidence that
- b) Jones saw a black cat on the street.

But even if S may be satisfied with his own reasonings, possibly nobody else will accept that S is really justified in believing that (a) is true.

Now what would be our reasoning for not accepting that 'S is justified in believing that (a)'?

The most plausible answer to the question is that we can not accept (b) as an evidence for (a) because there is no causal relation between (a) and (b). A proposition (a) is said to be the cause of (b) if it is true that whenever (b) is true (a) is true. Unless such a relation really exists between (a) and (b), S can not be justified in believing (a) on the ground of (b). Whether such causal relations ever exist, or if they do whether and how they can be known—are problems of knowledge and not in any way related to the notion of it. But again, it is definite that if (b) is true but (a) is found to be false, then there can not exist any causal relation between (a) and (b). In fact that is the only way for our falsifying a proposition of the form '(b) is the cause of (a)'.

Clearly then, Gettier does not believe that there is any causal relation between the evidence and the propositions (d) and (f)

...7



(in cases I and II respectively). But we have already discussed that the proposition 'S is justified in believing p on the ground of some evidence e' demands that S's reasoning should be logically sound and logical soundness of the reasoning demands that e should imply (either formally or materially) that p is true. Therefore Smith was not justified to believe (e) in case I, or (f) in case II. Whether causal relations are really knowable or not is a different question. If the answer to the question is 'yes', then it may be possible for us to be justified in believing certain proposition. If the answer is 'no', we can not be justified in believing those propositions. I believe that knowing a proposition in the sense of it's being some one's justified true belief may not be possible for all propositions. But, any way, Gettier's cases do not establish his claim that a justified true belief may not be knowledge.

Philosophy Department      DEBABRATA MUKHOPADHYAY  
North Bengal University  
DARJEELING - 734 430 (W. B.)

#### NOTES

1. Gettier., Edmund L.; "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"—*Analysis*, Vol. 23, Blackwell, 1963.
2. Chisholm, Roderick. M. ; *Perceiving : A Philosophical Study*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1957, p. 16.
3. Ayer, A. J. ; *The Problem of Knowledge*, Macmillan, New York, 1965, p. 34.
4. Gettier, Edmund. L.; "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis*, Vol. 23, Blackwell, 1963.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Cohen., Morris. R. & Nagel., Ernest ; *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method*, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 1968, p. 5.



## CUT THE SYLLOGISM TO ITS SIZE ! SOME REFLECTIONS ON INDIAN SYLLOGISM

Students of Indian philosophy have grown up with the platitude, indeed created and recreated through popular textbooks, that the difference between Indian<sup>1</sup> and Western syllogism lies in that the former is five membered whereas the latter, basically of the Aristotelian model, is three membered. We rarely question the validity of the statement. But such a generalization, in my opinion, fails to grasp adequately the nature of syllogism in Indian logic and epistemology. In the course of this essay, I would like to suggest that this inadequate understanding of the nature of Indian syllogism stems from a failure to distinguish between the twofold aspects of inference, epistemological and the logical, and this, in turn, is grounded in the failure to keep logic and epistemology apart, at least as theoretically distinct disciplines, howsoever closely they are related.<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say, the discussion on syllogism in Indian philosophy is largely in the context of a doctrine on the means of knowledge (*pramāṇa-vicāra*). Accordingly the nature of syllogism is probed into in the context of inference as a genuine epistemic mode (*anumāna-pramāṇa*). It is rather unfortunate here that most books treat first the nature of inference and only then its classification. While this method is pedagogically sound, it fails, however, to incorporate the insights that may be derived from the classification of inference within its nature. Further, the distinction between logic and epistemology as distinct disci-

Received : 5-8-87



plines was not maintained in India, the way it was done, say, between epistemology and metaphysics. With its axiological orientation, every branch of learning, including logic, the discipline of infinite possible world, was subordinated to a doctrine of liberation (*mokṣa-vicāra*) – *mānādhīnā meya-siddhiḥ* is only one instance thereof –, that did not necessarily well augur to the independent development of logic as a distinctive discipline. The Sanskrit terms, *nyāya*, *anvīkṣikī*, *parāmarśa*, *tarka*, all meant roughly 'analysis' and were rather indiscriminately used for epistemological as well as logical enterprise. And yet, it must undoubtedly be acknowledged that the *anumāna-pramāṇa* has a double aspect, epistemological and logical. *Anumāna* is an epistemological category in so far as it is a means, or an instrument (*karaṇa*), of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*). It is also a logical category in so far as it is a mode of reasoning (*nyāya/tarka-vidhāna*). Indeed these twofold aspects are highlighted in one type of the traditional classification of inference, the ground of which is the viewpoint of the *cui* ('to-whom?') of the inference, viz. inference for oneself (*svārthānumāna*) and inference for another (*parārthānumāna*).

Following the above classification, I suggest my own terms for the syllogisms formulated in their respective inferences. Let me name the former the psychogenic syllogism and the latter logogenic syllogism.

The psychogenic syllogism bears upon the psychology of knowledge and thus bespeaks of the epistemological aspect of inference. Consider the following example :

Whatever is smoky is fiery  
The yonder hill is smoky  
∴ The yonder hill is fiery

In the parlance of the Aristotelian logic, this could be considered to be a good and valid syllogism in the form of M-P, S-M.



∴ S-P. since the middle term ('smoke') is equally distributed in the major and the minor premises, and therefore the validity of the conclusion is said to be guaranteed, (although validity is not the concern of the form of a syllogism). Likewise in the Indian parlance this is considered to be a valid syllogism in so far as we conclude to the presence of the *sādhya* (major term) on the *pakṣa* (minor term) on the basis of our knowledge of the universal concomitance (*vyāpti*) between *sādhya* and *liṅga* (middle term), or of the state of universal pervasion of the *sādhya* in the *liṅga*, and also on the basis of the perceptual knowledge of the *liṅga* as present on the *pakṣa*. Thus, in the example cited, the first premise, 'Whatever is smoky is fiery', is the enunciation of the knowledge of the invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*) of *sādhya* with *liṅga*. We shall not ask if the knowledge enunciated therein is actually a case of cause-effect relation. This question, so often associated with Hume in modern western philosophy, was first raised by the Buddhists in the history of philosophy. They spoke of a contingent co-production of events as an alternate model for the causal theory. In our present context, it is sufficient for us to regard *vyāpti* to be a statement based on the repeated observation (*bhūyodarsana*) of the co-existence of two things/events, either causally joined or casually conjoined. The second premise is the enunciation of the perceptual knowledge of the *liṅga* as present on the *pakṣa*. In the example cited, 'The yonder hill is smoky', the *pakṣa* is a 'definite where' and the *liṅga* is perceived on it. Moreover, when it is stated to be an enunciation of a truth of perception, we should not imagine it to be a mere perception: it is also in the very same act conjoined to our memory of the *vyāpti* in question, lest the two premises should hang in the air without any relation between them. Thus, in the second stage there is indeed in our understanding the perception of something conjoined with the remembrance of *vyāpti*. Only when we put the



two premises together in our epistemic situation, we are in fact in a position to validate the conclusion in the third premise, 'The yonder hill is fiery'.

Having given the bare outlines of a psychogenic syllogism, I must now make two important observations. In the first place, the syllogism in question is psychogenic because it is framed in the context of inferential process that directly presents the truth to one's self (*psyche, svārtha*). Hence, as such it is not so much concerned with the formal *logical demonstration* of the truth arrived at inferentially. This way of looking at it, I admit, is rather negative. More positively however, the psychogenic syllogism may be said to present immediately before one's own psyche, or mind the truth of the inference. It is the (inferred) truth that such and such is the case, unperceived though, on the basis of something perceived as well as of the memory of the *vyāpti* relation between this perceived something and unperceived object/event. Hence, I may add, the psychogenic syllogism is the product of an 'inference that' (as distinct from the logogenic syllogism that will shortly be shown to be a product of an 'inference how').

In the second place, it is necessary that the stages, or premises in a psychogenic syllogism should keep to the order of sequence indicated above : 1. the enunciation of the knowledge of the universal concomitance between two events/things (*vyāpti*) obtained by our past experience; 2. the enunciation of the knowledge of the perceived event, along with the memory of *vyāpti*; and 3 the conclusion. The importance of the sequential order cannot be overstated, not only because we keep on expanding our epistemic enterprise where experience is the foundation of all auto-didactics, therefore in all syllogistic reasoning, but also because it determines the types of syllogistic. But when it is stated that the order should be the same, it is not intended to



mean that the nature of premises cannot be the same in a different type of syllogism; much less it is intended to mean that the number of the premises cannot be the same in a different type of syllogism.

The point I am driving home will be elucidated further, as I lay bare the outlines of the logogenic syllogism to compare and contrast it with the psychogenic syllogism.

Whereas the psychogenic syllogism may be said to be geared to the discovery of truth, the logogenic syllogism is directed to the formal *demonstration* of the truth discovered. Thus, the latter not only originates in the context of, but also at once bears itself upon the logical aspect of inference. Hence, while in the psychogenic syllogism, the culminating point being the discovery of truth, the truth discovered is presented as the conclusion, in the logogenic syllogism on the contrary, the culminating point being the demonstration of the truth discovered, we begin the syllogism by way of stating a thesis that stands in need of vindication (*probandum*) and proceed to explicate the reasons whereby the thesis may be said to have been finally and fully vindicated (*probatum*). It now goes without saying that, if the nature of logogenic syllogism is determined by its function, the order of premises rather than their number is crucial in our understanding of the logogenic syllogism, too.

The traditional Indian five membered syllogism, given in the context of *parārthānumāna* is, strictly speaking, a classic example of a logogenic syllogism. But, is it necessary that a logogenic syllogism ought to be constituted of five, and only five, premises? In the light of our discussion, it does not seem so. We can indeed formulate a logogenic syllogism with only three premises. Consider the following example :



The yonder hill is fiery  
 ∴ It is smoky  
 (and) Whatever is smoky is fiery

The first premise, here, is the thesis that stands in need of a demonstration; it is the *probandum* (*pratijñā*). The second premise is the *ratio* (*hetu*); it gives (some) reason for the thesis. The third premise is the statement of *vyāpti* and, as such we would be justified in according it the status of the major *ratio* (*hetu*), as distinct from and in continuation with the minor *ratio* enunciated in the second premise. The thesis may now be considered as vindicated in virtue of the minor and the major *hetu*. This at once indicates that we can, without any logical flaw, formulate a three membered logogenic syllogism. By implication it follows that it is not then the number of premises but their sequential order that constitutes the difference between the logogenic and the psychogenic syllogisms: In the one we present the (concluded) thesis and demonstratively state the reasons therefor to view the thesis as established; in the other we conclude directly to the truth on the basis of the same reasons. The nature of both syllogisms is determined by their respective function, and the function is clearly exhibited in the order of premises. As distinct from the 'inference that' that psychogenic syllogism is, the logogenic syllogism is the 'inference how'; it highlights the logical aspect of inference, as it bears upon logically demonstrating the truth arrived at.

If logogenic syllogism can legitimately be constructed with three premises, it may now be asked why the Indian logicians indulge in blowing up the law of parsimony in presenting us a logogenic syllogism that consists of five premises. The question is pertinent in the context where the Indian logicians do take pains to justify the legitimacy of the five premises in a syllogism. The crux of their justification boils down to the need of four logical



stages in order to show in the fifth and the concluding premise the force of the logical demonstration of the truth. But, in my considered opinion, the justification is misguided due to their failure to distinguish clearly between the twofold aspects of inference, to take into account the fuller implications of their own classification of inference as *svārtha* and *parārtha*, and thereby incorporate this insight into their understanding of the nature of syllogism itself. Let me explain.

Surprisingly, the third premise in the example cited of the logogenic syllogism is not named by the Indian logicians as *vyāpti*, in spite of the fact that *vyāpti* is the very foundation and the differentia of inference, whether psychogenic or logogenic. There is indeed to them an additional element within it, when it is incorporated in the traditional *parārthānumāna*; this is the element of an example ( *udāharaṇa* ). This has bestowed its own character on the naming of the third premise, in so far as what is essentially a *vyāpti* or the major *hetu*, is now known technically to be *udāharaṇa*. This at once introduces a serious difficulty in our understanding of the nature and function of the third premise. Whereas the nature and function of the third premise are determined by its being the *vyāpti* and the major *hetu*, it, being now conjoined to an example, is known by a psychological factor, extraneous to the (demonstrative) function of the logogenic syllogism. The Indian logicians seem to be confusing between the logical and the psychological aspects of an inference, therefore of a syllogism, especially within a syllogism that is supposedly for the demonstrative purposes. Thus, the *udāharaṇa*, or the third premise reads, 'Whatever is smoky is fiery, as for example kitchen'. 'As for example kitchen' imposes a psychological burden on a syllogism that is so far smoothly moving on the hinges of strictly logical relations between the *pakṣa* and the *liṅga* on the one hand and between *liṅga* and *sādhya* on the other. Needless to



say, such psychological intrusion within the pure logical relations is not merely redundant but undesirable.

To be fair to the Indian logicians, it is possible that they introduced an empirical instance in the form of an example to suggest that the *vyāpti* or the major *hetu*, derives ultimately its justification from the empirical instances. Thus they may have been keen on showing the empirical character of *vyāpti*. But, in my opinion, this explanation does not hold good for three reasons.

In the first place, the Indian philosophers are not in any better position than their western counterparts in establishing the validity of principle of induction beyond doubt. The attempts of such philosophers as Hume and Mill in the west either to destroy or to establish this principle on the basis of simple enumeration of particular instances were anything but successful. The statement is all the harsher in regard to the vindication of the principle. If all the particular instances in a given class are perceptually to be verified (which more often is a physical impossibility !), all syllogistic reasoning would become redundant. If, on the contrary, only a few instances are taken as sufficient to validate the principle of induction, it is surely a highly doubtful sufficiency. There is no reason why, having been proved true in hundred instances, our conclusion should not be proved false in the very next instance.

In the second place, proving the empirical character of *vyāpti* is not the same as proving the validity of *vyāpti* by way of particular instance. For the former can still be a logical exercise but the latter is not; The latter, I am afraid, is a psychological prop.

In the third place, what does an Indian logician look for in *vyāpti*? He is surely not looking for a statistical probability the kind of which Russell may be said to have formulated in his



understanding of the knowledge of general principles, without which there is no valid inference at all, thus the expansion of knowledge beyond the limited range of private experience of sense data and probably of one's own existence. Most Indian logicians are much more Naiyāyikas than they are prepared to admit. If they are the avowed<sup>1</sup> Naiyāyikas, the universal (*sāmānya*), therefore the *vyāpti* relation, is said to be directly perceived by way of extra-ordinary perception (*sāmānya-lakṣaṇā-pratyāsatti*). But such an understanding of *vyāpti* obtained through extra-epistemological considerations, besides violating their definition of *pratyakṣa* (*indriyārtha-sannikarṣa-janyam-jñānam*), may be said to be dubious epistemology; going a step further, it is bad logic, too. Again, if they are not the avowed Naiyāyikas, *vyāpti* is said to be abstracted from the particulars. This position is no better, as it begs the question. It is precisely this mode of abstraction that is under consideration and stands in need of justification. Hence the attempts of the Indian logicians for vindicating the logical relations with recourse to particular instances is bound to be futile. Logical relations are logical because they hold good universally in any possible world. They have little to gain from the empirical instances as psychological props. Therefore, it may be suggested that the Indian logicians should sever the appendage of the example from the *vyāpti* and reinstate it in its original logical status.

While only a modification is suggested in regard to the third premise, we may suggest, going a step further, that the fourth and the fifth premises should be completely deleted from the Indian *parāarthānumāna*. There is a need to cut the Indian syllogism to its size.

The fourth premise therein, technically known as *upanaya*, enunciates an instantiation of *vyāpti* in the *pakṣa*. As the name indicates, it is a 'bringing closer' ( $\sqrt{nī + upa}$ ) of the *pakṣa* to the



*vyāpti*, and thereby by implication, to *sādhya*. Hence the fourth premise, 'The yonder hill is smoky' for all its innocuous appearance, subtly includes within itself *vyāpti*. We are told, as a matter of fact, in our understanding it should be expanded to read in the form, 'The yonder hill has such smoke as is invariably pervaded by fire'. If this is not done, *vyāpti* and *upanaya* are said to merely dangle in the air without any logical connection. Finally, the fifth premise, '∴ The yonder hill is fiery', in form, is a repetition of the first. But, in content, it is said, it is not a mere restatement of the thesis (*pratijñā*) but rather the statement of the thesis as conclusively established (*nigamana*). This is the traditional understanding of *upanaya* and *nigamana*, according to the Indian logicians.

But our contention here bears upon the redundancy of both premises. Neither the logogenic syllogism nor the Indian syllogism in general requires *upanaya* or/and *nigamana*. Without any logical flaws, we can think of perfectly valid syllogisms with either the first three or last three premises of the five membered traditional *parārthānumāna*, provided that we divest the third premise of its psychological burden of an example and view its character purely as *vyāpti* or the major *hetu*. (I have already shown, there is no reason why it should not be done so.) The first three premises would constitute a logogenic syllogism in my scheme; likewise the last three (in the order of nos 3, 4, 5) the psychogenic syllogism. This mode of viewing syllogisms at once emphasizes the importance of the sequential order of the premises, that bestows on them the specific names, logogenic and psychogenic, and thereby highlights the logical or the epistemological aspects of inference itself. Indeed such a distinction is possible for the simple reason that we can theoretically distinguish between the disciplines of logic and epistemology, howsoever closely they are related in an epistemic enterprise.



It should be possible then to make a distinction between the 'how' and the 'that' of inferential knowledge. In the light of the above discussion, it needs hardly to be stated that the fourth and the fifth premises within the India *parāṛthānumāna* are not only superfluous but also tend to confuse between the logical and the epistemological issues. A careful analysis of the fourth premise reveals its superfluity, as it turns out to be only a combination of the second and the third premises sans example. There is no reason why we should not consider the thesis to have been established demonstratively in virtue of the two *hetus*, minor and the major; this at once makes the fourth premise redundant. To carry this argument a bit further : the thesis now stands already vindicated and the need for the fifth premise (*nigamana*), too, exposes itself to be vacuous.

By way of concluding, it must be admitted that the distinction between the western (Aristotelian) and the Indian syllogism as well as the distinction between the types of Indian syllogisms does not stem from the number of premises but rather from the order of the premises. The order has a direct bearing on the distinction between the aspects of inference, namely logical and epistemological, and thereby between the theoretical disciplines of logic and epistemology within our epistemic enterprise. The last of the distinction is very important in the history of philosophy. For, ironically, the west, that has furthered the cause of logic in recent times so significantly in the development of Mathematical logic from the humble beginning of the Aristotelian logic and thus espoused the cause of establishing a distinctive discipline of logic, seemed to have at least in its inception emphasized only the epistemological aspect of inference. Its concern for long seemed to have been restricted to psychogenic syllogism. Aristotle does not seem to have been aware of the possibility of a logogenic syllogism. What is worse, in the



presentation of his characteristic forms and modes, he even seems to confuse the psychogenic syllogism with the logogenic syllogism. But, if in recent times the west could redeem itself of this deficiency and acknowledge the *sui generis* character of logic, the impetus and the reasons therefor lie outside western philosophy, though not outside its intellectual culture. They lie largely in the development of knowledge in the area of physics and mathematics. Language philosophers seized only upon the opportunity provided by the physicists and the mathematicians.

Indian philosophers, on the other hand, seemed to have been aware of the double aspects of inference. But, again, ironically, India that did so much to further the cause of logic in its initial stages, be it in Buddhism or Nyāya, or Vedānta, failed to give it a distinctive status of a theoretical discipline. This may in part be due to the lack of impetus from the mathematical and the positive sciences. But this may perhaps be excused on the ground that India did not have a socio-cultural milieu requisit for the development of the mathematical and positive sciences. But what cannot be easily excused is the failure on the part of the Indian philosophers to seize upon the philosophical distinction that they had made between the epistemological and the logical aspects of inferential reasoning. Even within the limited context of inference, they ended up confusing the epistemological issues with the logical ones. The case of confusing a psychological/empirical example with the pure logical relation of *vyāpti* is a point at issue. Thus, their greater concern for the logical aspect of inference got so confounded with the epistemological issue that they failed to recognize that a logogenic syllogism could legitimately be framed with the first three premises of their five membered syllogism. Thus, the advantage of having recognized the double aspects of inference was blown up to the winds due to their confusing and confounding the logical and the epist-



philosophical issues within inferential knowledge. Little wonder then if logic in India could not establish itself as a theoretically independent discipline and was forced to remain as an appendage to epistemology.

Philosophy Department  
NEHU  
Mayurbhanj Complex  
Nongthymmai, Shillong-793014  
(Meghalaya)

CASSIAN R. AGERA

NOTES

1. I shall not enter into the question, if Indian philosophy has a syllogism (consisting of propositions) in the western sense. A student of philosophy everywhere has some common understanding of syllogism, when he speaks of a syllogistic reasoning.
2. N. V. Banerjee (*The Spirit of Indian Philosophy* : New Delhi : Arnold Heinemann Publishers, 1974, p. 65) is an exception at least in so far as the first half of my statement is concerned.



# OUR LATEST PUBLICATION

REGULARITY, NORMATIVITY AND RULES OF  
LANGUAGE AND OTHER ESSAYS IN  
PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

pp. 310

Prof. Rajendra Prasad  
Rs. 100/-

In this volume twenty essays of Prof. Rajendra Prasad, published earlier in different journals in India and abroad, are collected. In these essays philosophical analysis is brought to bear upon such themes as nature of language, relation between language and philosophy or that between modern logic and philosophy. There are essays in the collection which consider such issues as practical relevance of philosophy, the distinction between apriori and empirical propositions etc. In addition, some essays deal with concepts of substance, mind and religious belief, while some other discuss problems connected with objectivity of historical judgements, relation between man and god, role of reason and sentiment in human life. The last four essays in the collection discuss difficulties connected with philosophical synthesis and consider relation between tradition, progress, freedom, reverence and creativity.

The essays would be immensely helpful to both students and teachers of philosophy.

For further details contact :

The Editor ,  
Indian Philosophical Quarterly ,  
Philosophy Department ,  
University of Poona, Pune 411 007.



## DISCUSSION

### Professor Devaraja on the Emergence of Facts

The Concept of fact seems to be involved directly or indirectly, in most of the philosophical things Devaraja maintains in his recent book *Freedom, Creativity and Value : Humanist View of Man and World*.<sup>1</sup>

Devaraja is not a reasoning or arguing type of thinker, i.e. not one who considers a philosophical thesis worth maintaining if and only if it is supported by a clearly stated or stateable argument or reasoning.

He seems to be, on the other hand, a synoptic or holistic thinker. It is extremely difficult to locate or state his reasoning for any one of his conclusions, and he is so passionately committed or attached to his views that he does not hesitate to emphasize them time and again. It is not, therefore, easy to examine any one of his philosophical views in the way some of us are wont to. All this is very much true of his view about facts. I shall not, therefore, attempt to examine his arguments whatever they may be. I shall only try to find out the best way of understanding some of the things he says about facts.

There are certain obvious things which, we can say, go into the making of our concept of fact. These are the raw data which any philosophical talk about it must respect, or at least not ignore.



A fact is not an object, a property, or a relation. It makes no sense to say that the object called 'pen' or the property 'smoothness', or the relation called 'costlier than' is a fact. But it makes very good sense to say that it is a fact that my pen writes smoothly or that it is costlier than my neighbour's. When something is a fact, it is accidental that it is a fact. If it is a fact that my pen writes smoothly, there is nothing necessary in its being a fact. It might have been the case that my pen did not write smoothly. It is this feature of a fact that makes factual propositions accidental or non-necessary. Since it is not necessary that my pen writes smoothly, even when it is a fact that it does, the proposition 'My pen writes smoothly' is not a necessary proposition. Facts are not propositions, but those things which make factual propositions true or false. The fact that my pen writes smoothly makes true the proposition 'My pen writes smoothly' and false its denial 'My pen does not write smoothly'. A fact, therefore, cannot be true or false.

But there is a sense of finality in the concept of fact. If it is a fact that my pen writes smoothly, it is a fact that it does; if it is a fact, then it is a fact. If you disagree with me and question its facticity, either you do not know how to write with a pen, or are writing by holding the pen in a different way from the way I do, etc., or you mean something different by 'smoothness'. You *cannot say* it a fact *for* me and not a fact *for* you if your style of writing, or criterion of smooth writing, is different from mine. All that you can say is that it is a fact that my pen writes smoothly if it is held in a certain manner and 'smooth writing' means what I mean by it. And, in that sense, it is a fact, and *not* a fact *for* any particular person.

For Devaraja "Facts arise as we contemplate two or more objects, or two or more aspects of a simple object, as conjoined or separated by a relation" (p. 25). The two words 'arise' and



'contemplate' bother me. If 'contemplate' is used to mean what it ordinarily means, its meaning is nearer to that of 'thinking' and farther off from that of 'seeing' or any sense-experience word. Then, contemplating has nothing to do with something being a fact. I may be contemplating right now a visit to an old friend in the city, but from this there would not 'arise' a fact about my visiting him, or any fact whatsoever.

If we take 'contemplate' to mean something like a sense-experience, say, something similar to what seeing means, then Devaraja's 'arise' would not keep quiet. If I contemplate, i.e. see a bird sitting on the tree across the road, then it is a fact that a bird is sitting on the tree across the road. This fact does not arise out of my seeing/contemplating. I see the bird there and therefore am entitled to say that it is a fact that the bird is there. I am not seeing the fact; I am seeing the bird there. My seeing the bird there is a reason, for, or my authority for, saying that it is a fact that a bird is sitting. When asked, why do I say that it is a fact, I would say: 'Because I see a bird sitting...' and not 'Because my seeing gives rise to the fact that...'. Devaraja says that facts arise when we contemplate some aspects of an object or objects conjoined or separated. But if I see the bird having a black head, then it is fact that it has a black head. Similarly, if I see the bird conjoined with the tree (i.e. sitting on the tree), then it is a fact that the bird is conjoined with the tree. There occurs no process here like that of the fact arising, or my seeing giving rise to it. The fact of the bird's sitting on the tree can be said to have arisen only if it did not exist when I began seeing the bird on the tree. But if it did not exist, if it was not a fact that the bird was on the tree, then I could not have seen it there. On the other hand, if it was there, then it was a fact that the bird was there, and



therefore, we cannot speak of its 'arising' on account of, or on the occasion of, my seeing the bird there.

Devaraja also says that "Facts arise out of the interpretation we put on objects and their configuration" (p. 63). Interpreting is not the same as contemplating or seeing. In contemplating or seeing mind is not active in the same manner, or to the same extent, as in interpreting. Interpreting is more deliberate, willed and even intellectual or rational. It is also less spontaneous or habitual than the latter. Looking at some wrinkles on her face in the mirror a one-time beauty may, without making any deliberate effort, start contemplating her aging figure. But she *cannot interpret* the wrinkles to mean the impact of aging, or to mean the impending loss of her charms, without some deliberate effort. If facts arise when we contemplate, the contribution of mind in their arising would be minimal, or very little. But if they arise when we interpret, it would definitely be very great. Of course, all this can be said only if it can be said that facts arise. But even if it can, Devaraja has to choose between 'contemplating' and 'interpreting'.

While speaking of interpretation, he speaks of "objects and their configuration". "Facts arise out of the interpretation we put on objects and their configuration". We can put an interpretation on an object and its configuration only when we are aware of the object and its configuration, just as we can put a cap on the head of a person only if we are aware of the head and its relationship with the body it belongs to. But to be aware of an object and its configuration is to be aware of at least one fact about it, namely the fact that it is located in a certain state of affairs. This fact, therefore, cannot arise out of any interpretative activity since it is presupposed by the latter. Therefore, there is at least one fact which is independent of our interpretative activity. Devaraja is not saying that we interpret facts, or con-



template facts. That we definitely do. He is rather saying that facts arise when we interpret or contemplate objects and their configurations. But the framework of his presentation implies that there must be facts before they arise, and this is a paradox. If a thing is of a type which arises, it cannot be there before it arises.

Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that facts arise when we interpret objects "When interpreted objects begin to appear to us as bearers of meanings – empirical, pragmatic or spiritual. Now all such interpretation is related to our interests and so... is infected with subjectivity" (p. 63). By 'meaning' he means significance, importance, or value. He speaks of objects as bearers of meaning. But when interpreted objects give rise to facts then, does he mean to say that facts are bearers of meanings? Who are the bearers of meaning, objects, facts or both? This question he does not raise but seems to make no distinction between saying that objects have values and saying that facts have values.

It seems to me that he cannot say that objects have values. Objects, when contemplated or interpreted, he says, give rise to facts, and whenever we experience an object we do contemplate it, or put some interpretation on it. We, therefore, always meet with facts and never with unrelated objects, i.e. objects not housed in some facts. If we never meet an object, we can never ascribe any value to it. This means that all objects as objects are valueless. But this is an old consequence both axiologically and semantically. Values are, as per our evaluative experiences and practices, ascribed to objects, i.e. to things, experiences, actions, or persons, and not to facts. We call Shakespeare's *Hamlet* a great work of art, Bhīṣma's vow of celibacy a great sacrifice, or Yudhiṣṭhira a moral hero. We do not ascribe these value-predicates to any fact. Rather, we cannot because if we



Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri  
 not feel comfortable. In fact, he should not because in such a  
 necessitarian universe creativity and freedom would evaporate

Devaraja says that "Depending on how we choose to view one or more objects, they may give rise to a number of facts" (p, 65). Our choice would certainly, if possible, open a window to let creativity and freedom enter into our world. But we cannot choose our interests since they are constitutional and they would not let us choose which facts to make arise or emerge. Had they been non-constitutional they would have been under our control and non-dictatorial in the emergence of facts. He says that when we interpret, for example, the relationship between a chair and a table, depending upon our different interest, different facts like the following emerge : "(a) the table has a better polish than the chair; (b) the table is too high for this chair; (c) the chair is three feet away from the table; (d) the table is three times as heavy as the chair, etc" (p 65). But none of these facts involve or exhibit an interest which we can claim to be rooted in our actual constitution. Of the interest in the relative polish of a table and of a chair, the interest in the relative height of a table and of a chair, the interest in the distance between a chair and a table, and the interest in the relative weight of a table and of a chair, none is a constitutional one. These are all ephemeral, variable, interests which may differ from person to person, or even with the same person at different times. Such non-constitutional interests, being themselves accidental, will not transport any element of necessity in our perception or interpretation of objects and their configurations. But they need not be intersubjective or shareable by all, or a group of human beings and therefore will not do what Devaraja wants interests to do. He wants them to crown facts with objectivity by being intersubjective and shareable. If intersubjectivity and shareability are dropped, noth-



## Discussion

489

ing would, in his scheme of things, be available to entitle us to say that any fact is objective

"The objectivity of a fact consists in that its apprehension is common to all or a number of persons" (p 59). This is possible inspite of facts being infected with subjectivity because this "subjectivity is not the subjectivity of the individual, but that of the species" (*Ibid*). When the apprehension is shared by all human beings, the apprehended fact has the highest grade of objectivity, and when only by a group, it has a lower grade of objectivity. A group can consist of even one person; it would be what logicians call a unit class. In monistic theism God is a unit class. It means, then, no fact would be absolutely subjective. If only one man apprehends a fact it has objectivity of the lowest grade, if two men then one of a little higher grade, if three, of a still higher grade, and so on, so forth. But if nothing is subjective, nothing could be objective. It is the contrast between the subjective and the objective which is necessary for the meaningful employment of both the terms. If one becomes vacuous, the other will also *ipso facto* do.

Devaraja's calling the interests involved in the emergence of facts constitutional introduces another unwelcome feature in his theory. It means that facts would be shared or shareable by all human beings because what is constitutional would be constitutional to all human beings, i.e. to all members of the human species. All facts would then have only one grade of objectivity. We cannot call it one of the highest grade because no grade lower than it would be possible. We cannot say that fact F is shared by a group consisting of  $n$  number of persons and fact G by a larger group consisting of  $n+m$  number of persons and therefore G is more objective than F. All this we cannot do because the interests which are constitutional to human beings would be constitutional to all human beings. It seems to me,



sense in which the latter are past. A fact is a fact whether it is about something present or past. What we reconstruct is the evidence for saying that something is a fact, and not the fact itself. A reconstructed fact seems to be a contradiction in terms. A reconstructed building is not the same old building but it is very much like the latter. A reconstructed fact would also, Devaraja might say, be like the original one. Even if it is, it is not the original one. But it would not be a fact at all and, therefore, the question of its being like the earlier one would not arise.

A reconstructed fact could at the most be a hypothesis and a hypothesis is not a fact. We can verify a hypothesis but not a fact. It makes no sense to verify a fact. When we ask someone to verify or check his facts we mean not his facts but what he *believes to be* facts. To verify what one believes to be a fact is to verify a *belief* and *not* to verify a *fact*. Facts are the verifiers of beliefs or hypotheses; they themselves cannot be said to need verification. We can bring a fact into existence by doing something. By killing Gandhi Godse made it a fact that Gandhi was killed by Godse. But doing this also is not to verify a fact. A reconstructed fact cannot be even a candidate for being a fact. Being only a hypothesis, or a belief, it could only be a candidate for being a true or confirmed proposition.

Let me now explore the possibility of resurrecting a past fact. Devaraja conceives of it as lying buried in a document. If it lies buried, then we may say that it may be taken out of its grave and thus resurrected. But what remains buried in a document is not a fact but a statement about or referring to a fact. A document is a *record* of some facts, and facts get recorded by being put into language, i. e. being stated, referred to, described, catalogued, enumerated, etc. We can discover, collate, piece together, or interpret a set of statements contained in a document to justify the belief that something is or is not a fact. But



this is not to resurrect a fact out of its grave, but only to use the grave as a source of evidence. Indian history does not contain the fact that Gandhi was killed by Godse, nor does it contain the events connected with the murder. It contains the relevant pieces of information, descriptions of the relevant events, etc. It may not even contain the statement 'Gandhi was killed by Godse', or one equivalent to it. But still we can use a set of relevant statements occurring in it to authorise us to say it is a fact that Gandhi was killed by Godse.

After the short detour, let me return to the subjectivity-objectivity of facts. That some facts are subjective is not denied by philosophers, nor it is merely this obvious truth which Devaraja claims to uphold. His is a claim that all facts are subjective, or have a subjective component, because to call any fact a fact involves human interpretation and interest. But there is also an element of objectivity in facts derived from the shareability of our experience of facts.

The interpretative activity, which leads to the emergence of facts, is not arbitrary, he says, because it is a fact that the human interests which guide it "are rooted in man's actual constitution and the objects can be made to bear only some meanings relative to those interests" (p. 64). Because these interests guide the emergence of facts and are *constitutional* to a human being, it follows that no human being can cease to have them or alter them without ceasing to be a human being. They have, therefore, to be necessarily used in the emergence of facts and when a fact emerges, it necessarily emerges, since there is no other way for it to come into being. This means that all facts are necessary and, therefore, all factual propositions which truly refer to them, or are about them, are necessarily true. With this picture of the world of facts and of factual language. I believe, even Devaraja would



did that would make no sense. It makes no sense to call any fact a great work of art, or a great sacrifice, or a moral hero.

A fact may be relevant, and some facts are relevant, to our ascribing some values to some objects. But that is a different matter. For a fact to be relevant to the ascription of a value to a thing is very different from its itself being the bearer of that value. That a man does not loose temper is relevant to calling him considerate, but the *fact* that he does not loose temper is neither considerate nor inconsiderate. No fact is morally right or wrong, aesthetically beautiful or ugly; a fact is just a fact. If a philosophy permits us to have only facts, and facts cannot have values, it takes away all values from us.

But let us grant that facts have values and facts arise, and ask what kind of entities, ontologically speaking, they are. Deva-raja calls them "subjectively objective" (p. 22). They are subjective because they arise as a result of our interpretation which is influenced by our interest. Facts have meaning and in assigning to them their meanings our interest plays a great role. "A fact enjoys being or being there only as long as it is seen or remembered; a past fact, lying buried in a document, may be reconstructed or resurrected with a view to reviewing or contemplating it by an interested party" (p. 26). I think what he means is that a present fact's being consists in being seen or perceived by an interested person. This position seems to be very much like Berkeley's. In fact he dittoes Berkeley when he says that "In a real sense their (facts') being consists in being perceived or apprehended" (p. 64).

A past fact, on the other hand, is reconstructed or resurrected. Reconstructing and resurrecting are not identical kinds of activities. To reconstruct a thing, say, a dilapidated house, is to construct it again when it does not exist in its original form



Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

but some or all of its constituent parts are available in some form though not in their original form. To resurrect a thing is to bring it whole back to its earlier form, say, to bring back a dead body out of its grave to life. Can we speak of reconstructing a past fact? Let us make an experiment with the help of some examples.

It is a fact that I am writing this note right now. To put it accurately, we can say it is a fact that RP is writing at time T on the day D the note N, 'T' denoting this time, 'D' this day, and 'N' this note. After I have stopped writing, it would become a past fact which an interested person according to Devaraja, can reconstruct or resurrect. I shall take up the attempt at reconstruction first, and to give to it maximum plausibility, assume it being made after a lapse of several years. Suppose some one, in the year 2001, after going through the various things I have written, and placing together some relevant items or data about them, concludes that RP wrote N at T on D. How would he state his conclusion? He would say that it is a fact, or seems to be a fact, that RP wrote , depending on his assessment of the available evidences. If he thinks that they are authentic and complete he would say it is fact that and if he thinks that they are only plausible, he would say it seems to be a fact that ... He would *not* say it *was* a fact, or it seems to *have been* a fact... This fact *is about* something past, and the pastness of what it is about is indicated by the tense of 'wrote', the main verb occurring in the that-clause.

To take another example, we say it *is* a fact that Gandhi was killed by Godse. We *never* say, *nor can* we if we speak truthfully, that it *was* a fact that Gandhi was killed by Godse. To say it was a fact would mean it is no longer a fact and that would amount to saying something untrue. Facts could be about past things but that does not mean that they are also past in the



therefore, that Devaraja cannot say all of the following things: (a) that the interests involved in facts are *constitutional*; (b) that facts are *shareable because of* the interests being constitutional; c) that shareability *constitutes* objectivity, and (d) that objectivity admits of *gradations*. He may have to drop or modify some of them.

The constitutionality of interests seems to be, consequently, unfriendly even to the doctrine of the gradations of subjectivity. If involvement of constitutional interests makes facts subjective, then all facts would be equally, and not more or less, subjective. They would be subjective in the sense that they would depend on some interests of the cognizer. A cognizer's interest is his interest even when it is common to all members of his species.

*Shareability of facts* is very crucial to Devaraja's scheme of things. But it too seems to me a naughty notion. How to decide the shareability of a fact? Suppose I say that Russell is a mathematical logician and I take it to be a fact that he is. How can I know that you share this fact? I cannot look into your mind to check whether you have the same interest as I have. Moreover, you can share it even when you do not have an interest similar to mine. You may be hating mathematical logic and admiring traditional logic. Therefore, you single out its pioneer to condemn him. On the other hand, I love mathematical logic and single out its pioneer for extolling his contributions. This shows that we can share a fact even if our interests are non-constitutional. The interest in mathematical or traditional logic is definitely not constitutional even to all philosophers. One way out of this situation is to make an appeal to behavioural congruence. We may say we test whether or not two persons share the same fact by finding out whether or not they behave with regard to it in a congruent manner. I think this a safe enough way. But then the importance which Devaraja attaches



to constitutional interests, or to interests, will get very much watered down.

I conclude with the submission that what I have done in this short note is only an exercise in drawing, as coherent a picture as I can, of the main philosophical things Professor Devaraja says about the concept of fact in the book. It is very likely that I have mistaken some genuine embellishments of his theory as impairers of its elegance. This danger is very often there when one is discussing a theme, however central it may be, presented in the style of a book like Devaraja's *Freedom, Creativity and Value*.

Opposite Stadium,  
Rajendra Nagar,  
PATNA 800 016 (Bihar).

RAJENDRA PRASAD

#### NOTE

1. Indus Publishing Company, Delhi, 1988.



## BOOK - REVIEWS

### I

CHINCHORE, (DR.) MANGALA R.; *DHARMAKĪRTI'S THEORY OF HETU-CENTRICITY OF ANUMĀNA*; DELHI, MOTILAL BANARSIDASS, 1989; pp. xvii + 196; Price Rs. 125/- (HC).

Dr. Mangala Chinchore's book under review is a solitary attempt to present in sufficient detail important points of the theory of *Anumāna* of Dharmakīrti, an important Buddhist philosopher. It basically derives its inspiration from and centres around his valuable work called *Hetubindu* and two commentaries thereupon. It is, nonetheless, not neglectful of Dharmakīrti's other works available in Sanskrit and various commentaries to them. The book, thus, is as close to the extant appropriate original sources as one could rightly expect. This sort of proximity to the original sources is an important asset of the book, a feature which seems to be becoming progressively rarer especially because many an author are either ignorant of Sanskrit or else too slothful to do the pains-taking work that such an exercise obviously requires. Fortunately, Dr. Chinchore has not distanced herself from the extant original sources in this way, for whatever reason it may be.

There is a fairly, although erroneously, wide-spread view that the theory of *Anumāna*, which was developed by adherents of various schools of Indian philosophical thought, is in agreement with the minimum structure of it as it was outlined by



the adherents of *Prācīna Nyāya*, and that the modifications or innovations introduced in it by others are of slight and, at the most, academic importance. Secondly, it is also held that there are no major differences concerning the discussion of the basic framework of *Anumāna* among the adherents of either *Prācīna Nyāya* or those of Buddhism. The views prevalent in this way seem either to pre-empt significance and importance of inter-school or intra-school debates and controversies, or else partially or completely overlook variant attempts made by such logicians as Dīnāga or Dharmakīrti and importance of them. The book under review is, again, fortunately, not only not blind to this sort of consideration and its importance but is also quite transparently open to it. This, therefore, seems to be another important asset of the book

The authoress seems to be quite right in holding that perhaps Dharmakīrti's theory of *Anumāna* is the only one articulated in Indian subcontinent wherein every significant aspect of it revolves basically around one or the other important consideration concerning *Hetu*. The title of the book seems to be squarely indicative of it, and every worthwhile aspect of the theory of *Anumāna* is shown, in the book, to be in this way centering around *Hetu*. This is good enough as far as it goes, and her enterprise on this count seems to deserve careful attention of the concerned. There can be difference of opinion regarding the principal point she has laboured all through the book to put forth. But it can hardly be held, it seems, that it is not backed by evidence from original sources and advanced with the help of cogent arguments in its support.

In the first chapter she has attempted to present a sketch of the conceptual framework of Dharmakīrti's philosophy and situate significance of such work of his as *Hetubindu* in it. The starting point is well taken in so far as it orients the prospective



readers and researchers, and presents a trailer of the sort of issues one would have to grapple with in careful consideration of Dharmakīrti's philosophy in its important aspects. But here itself twofold danger seems to loom large and calls for further prolonged and intensive research. First, two important treatises of Dharmakīrti, viz., *Santānāntarasiddhi* and *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, are still unavailable in Sanskrit, although fragments of two chapters of the latter have been placed at the disposal of the concerned, thanks mainly to the pains-taking researches of Profs. Steinkellner and Vetter. But this is inadequate. The two works of Dharmakīrti just referred to seem to be important in their own way, although for different reasons. Whereas *Pramāṇaviniścaya* is supposed to present Dharmakīrti's own philosophy in outline, the *Santānāntarasiddhi* seems to be a landmark in intra-school controversy with reference to Buddhism. Given this, their non-availability in Sanskrit seems to highlight a hurdle in one's being able to present a comprehensive sketch of the conceptual framework of Dharmakīrti's philosophy. Secondly the present as well as the previous work of the authoress seem to have a major bearing upon the inter-school controversy so far as *Pracīna Nyāya* and Buddhism are concerned. But Dharmakīrti's conceptual framework seems to have been shaped by three major pillars of it : (a) his philosophy considered in the light of inter-school controversy, (b) intra-school debates, and (c) his own contribution and innovation. For one's being able to say something really worthwhile on the latter two counts one would be required to devote oneself to the careful and concerted study of *Santānāntarasiddhi* and *Pramāṇaviniścaya*. It is perhaps only after one has dedicatedly worked for a decade or more on these works and combined the contours of Dharmakīrti's conceptual framework they provide with those which his extant works in Sanskrit provide that one would be able to present a comprehensive sketch of the conceptual framework of Dharmakīrti's philosophy.



kīrti's philosophy. One may perhaps hope that Dr. Chinchore can make some worthwhile contribution along these lines in years to come. Till such a time, however, the conceptual framework of Dharmakīrti's philosophy presented by her in the first chapter of her present work has to be held to be provisional in character. This point needs carefully to be noted and borne in mind at the present juncture of Dharmakīrti scholarship, for otherwise misplaced sense of self-complacency on this count would be highly dangerous and intellectually ruinous. The authoress, fortunately, is humble enough not to have fallen in the trap of this kind of self-complacency.

There seems to be a similar limitation at stake so far as her attempt to study implications of Dharmakīrti's theory of *Hetu*-centricity of *Anumāna* with reference to not only Dharmakīrti's philosophy but also Buddha's thought. Here, too, a two-fold danger seems to lurk. First, our incomplete knowledge of Dharmakīrti's philosophy, especially because his two important treatises are not available in Sanskrit. Secondly, Dharmakīrti's philosophy cannot be considered in complete isolation from the philosophy of his predecessors from the camp of Buddhism, although it is true that he markedly differs from many of them on several major counts. Nevertheless, a comprehensive study of the implications of Dharmakīrti's theory of *Anumāna* has also to wait till fairly reliable data and its appropriate interpretation are made available on the two above-mentioned counts through concerted researches carried over a prolonged period of time and in face of whatever hurdles one may have patiently to overcome. Even on this count the authoress does not fortunately seem to be oblivious of the importance of the point we have made.

Lastly, those important aspects of Dharmakīrti's theory of *Anumāna* which she has quite cogently discussed in her book-



say, consideration of *Svārthānumāna* as epistemic condition of *Anumāna*, *Pakṣa*, *Sādhya* and *Hetu* as structural, and *Vyāpti* and *Pakṣadharmatā* as regulative conditions of *Anumāna*, or classification of *Anumāna* into *Svabhāva*, *Kārya* and *Anupalabdhi*, or distinction between determiners of validity and those of soundness of *Anumāna*, or ultimately the nature and significance of the kinds of *Hetvābhāsa* considered by Dharmakīrti – are certainly very important and her scholarly discussion of them has made a significant contribution to Dharmakīrti scholarship the world over. However, an important rider needs to be added to it. Many of these issues have also been found discussed in Dharmakīrti's work so far unavailable in Sanskrit, viz. *Pramāṇaviniścaya*. Reinforcing and strengthening the discussion – even modifying it if the need be – of these points in the light of evidence furnished in this work of Dharmakīrti in years to come would immensely enhance the intellectual worth of the work and mark a major contribution to Dharmakīrti scholarship.

The three points we discussed above are not in any way meant to cast any aspersion on the work under review. They are meant primarily to bring to the notice of the concerned the lines which Dharmakīrti scholarship would have to take in future and the kind of hurdles it would be required to cross courageously. At the present juncture we have unfortunately to make do with and make appropriate use of whatever information that is at our disposal and present cogently satisfactory account of various aspects of Dharmakīrti's philosophy, including his theory of *Anumāna*, however provisional and tentative it may be. On this count the authoress seems to have done a laudable work and therefore she deserves to be congratulated, notwithstanding whatever difference of opinion on the count of interpretation of certain concepts in Dharmakīrti's philosophy that there may be.



The book has been provided with requisite indices and a fairly comprehensive bibliography. Errors of printing are negligible.

In sum, the book is scholarly, well-written and deserves to be carefully studied by anybody interested in the philosophy of Dharmakīrti and its importance.

Philosophy Department  
University of Poona  
Pune 411 007.

M. P. MARATHE



## II

ALSTON, (Dr.) A. J. (tran.) *THE METHOD OF THE VEDĀNTA : A CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF THE ADVAITA TRADITION* (translation into English of Śrī Swāmī Satchidānandendra's *VEDĀNTA PRKRIYĀ PRATYABHIJNĀ*), London, Kegan Paul International, 1989; pp. xxx + 975, Price £ 65-00 (HC).

There is a rampantly prevalent view, perhaps unintentionally pioneered chiefly by the introductory work entitled *Sarvadarśana-saṁgraha* of Mādhavācārya which came unfortunately to 'be' adopted later on as a model of writing history of Indian philosophy by many historians like Radhakrishnan, Hirianna, Dasgupta etc., according to which the only way to study contributions made by different philosophical trends which flourished in the Indian subcontinent, especially up to the close of 17th or 18th century, is to take into account their very general features under the banner of a particular school like Jainism, Buddhism, Nyāya, Vedānta etc., giving the impression that various adherents of the same school of thought, who appeared on the intellectual horizon at different times, merely further and further elaborated the tenets of the particular trend, given that once it was pioneered, due to whatever contingency it may be. We are continuously being bull-dozed and subjected by the view under consideration to such an extent that we have lost sensitivity not only to inter-school and intra-school debates and controversies which went on for thousands of years between adherents of different trends of philosophical thought in the sub-continent, but also to the contribution made by various philosophers to the trends to which they subscribed—both from the point of view of their growth and development as well as decay and degeneration; especially the latter to such an extent that they came almost to be fossilised and converted into museum-pieces, to be observed and forgotten



as quickly as one can simply because they have lost contact with our present life and its aspirations, and, thus, serving only the interest of historical scholarship. In course of time the philosophical trends under consideration remained an exclusive concern of Pandits, and such Pandits also isolated themselves from common people as well as legitimate aspirations they should cherish in this lives.

The voluminous book under review is perhaps a solitary exception to the above-mentioned view of considering any trend of Indian philosophy, especially with reference to *Advaita Vedānta*. The principal point of the book as well as its comprehensive treatment is backed by copious and elaborate quotations from the original sources and cogent arguments marshalled in its support, notwithstanding difference of opinion that may exist. The whole book is very scholarly, quite comprehensive—especially since it takes into its compass the development of *Advaita Vedānta* spread over at least one thousand years brought about through dozens of scholarly works—forceful and well-reasoned, and vividly exemplifying pains-taking research carried over years. The work is laudable and both the late Swāmī as well as the translator deserve to be congratulated, although for different reasons. Any concerted and serious student of *Advaita Vedānta* should be thankful to the late Swāmī for clarity in his thought and lucidity in exposition backed by sincerity of conviction which emerged as a result of critical study of various texts carried over decades. The translator, too, has done his job, on the whole, quite well, although it would have been not only less misleading but immensely beneficial as well if he would have refrained from using such terms as Absolute (*Brahman*), superimposition (*adhyāsa*), consciousness (*cit*), bliss (*ānanda*), meditation (*upāsanā*), modification (*vikāra*), presumption (*prithāpatī*) etc. and retained the original Sanskrit expressions,



as he has done in the case of such expressions as *Hiraṇyagarbha*, *Māyā*, *Prājña* etc. This is especially because although the expressions used by the translator are current in English while discussing themes relating to Indian philosophy, nonetheless they do not cease to be misleading, no matter whether they are used by a foreigner or an Indian. Sometimes the translator falls prey to the temptation of literal translation as — “continual remembrance of the holy feet of the most venerable” (p. 943), forgetting or overlooking the fact that certain expressions in a certain language — say, Sanskrit — are a matter of stylistic flourish and when translated literally become so hackneyed that one is hardly in a position to make any sense of it in the language in which translation is executed. By the same token *Hiraṇyagarbha* should have been translated as golden-foetus! Thank heaven the translator did not do so, and the over-all number of such hackneyed translations in the entire book is fortunately negligible.

The central thesis of the book, which is at once a history, a reference book and a reader of *Advaita Vedānta* rolled in one, is that the teaching of Gaudapāda, Śaṅkara and Sureśvara—the three taken together comprising what is known as the *Bhāṣya-prasthāna* of the *Advaita Vedānta*—alone is coherent concerning central tenets of the contention of the school, while the contention of the adherents of the *Bhāmatīprasthāna*—pioneered by Vācaspati Miśra—and that of the adherents of the *Vivaraṇa-prasthāna*—founded by the *Pañcapādikā* of Padmapāda—introduces one or the other deviance and departure from and distortion of this or that important point put forth by some or the other member of the *Bhāṣyaprasthāna*, although the former claim to be presenting and explicating tenets of Śaṅkara's *Advaita Vedānta*. This, again, they do under the impact and influence of Mīmāṃsaks, Naiyāyikas, or even such opponents of Śaṅkara as Bhāskara. The book also shows how significance and



importance of *Anubhava*, so characteristically emphasised by Upaniṣads, came progressively to be diluted, ignored or dismissed altogether and something else came to be naively and unwittingly substituted for it. This sort of tendency at the hands of such writers like Śrī Harṣa, Chitsukha, Madhusūdana Saraswati etc. takes such a topsy-turvy turn that logic-chopping and hair-splitting alone came to be reckoned as the sole means of knowing Brahman !

The entire book relies only upon the data carefully gleaned from original sources totally bereft of drawing upon any secondary source, inclusive of the numerous publications of the late Swāmī himself. What a remarkable, patient and perseverant mode of sticking to the original sources on the one hand and non-deviance from the principal point at issue on the other ! It is an illustrious example of doing any profoundly worthwhile research-worthy of being emulated by any serious-minded researcher. We wholeheartedly recommend that anybody interested in *Advaita Vedānta* must make the work under review object of his concerted and repeated study.

The book is provided with index and bibliography. Instead of seeking to exact exorbitant price which individuals as well as number of institutions in India can hardly afford to pay, it would be better if a cheaper Indian edition of it is brought out as early as possible to make it accessible to as large number of interested readers as possible.

Philosophy Department,  
University of Poona,  
PUNE 411 007

M. P. MARATHE



INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY  
VOLUME XVI

*No. 1, JANUARY 1989*

P. R. Bhat	:	Rigidity and Necessity in Kripke	1
Jerry I. Jacobson	:	Has God's Mystery Been Revealed to Modern Science	35
Arati Barua	:	Schopenhauer on Will : A Critique	43
Joseph Wayne Smith	:	Young on the Coherence of Anti-Realist Relativism	61
Chukwudum B. Okolo	:	The African Person : A Cultural Definition	67
A. Kasem	:	Can Berkeley be Called an Imagist ?	75
Ajai R and Shakuntala A. Singh	:	Psychiatric Ethics : Role of Philosophical Inquiry	89

*No. 2, APRIL, 1989*

F. A. Shamsi	:	Whitehead's Method of Extensive Abstraction	125
A. Kanthamani	:	Richard Rorty's Metaphilosophical Argument	163
Sajahan Miah	:	Russell's Non-Phenomenalist Reduction of Physical Objects	177



S. Sambasivam	: Affirmative Action and Reverse Discrimination	197
V. C. Thomas	: Death and the Meaning of Human Existence	213

*No. 3. JULY, 1989*

R. P. Peerenboom	: Buddhist Process Ethics : Dissolving the Dilemmas of Substantialist Metaphysics	247
S. A. Shaida	: Moral Scepticism	269
Mahasweta Chaudhury	: Identity as Necessity : Nozick's Objection-Kripke Replies	283
A. D. P. Kalansuria	: The Dhamma and the Notion of 'Perception' : A Conceptual Technique Made Explicit	291
Jagat Pal	: Modern Analysis of Syllogistic Logic : A Critical Reflection	303
Mangala R. Chinchore	: Dharmakīrti on Criteria of Knowledge	319
Roshmi Goswami	: On the "Incompleteness" of a Musical Work	345

*No. 4, OCTOBER, 1989*

Maduabu Dukor	: African Cosmology and Ontology	367
---------------	----------------------------------	-----



Tora Basu	:	Kant's Conception of Rational Action	393
Bijoy H. Boruah	:	Fictional Emotion, Quasi-Desire and Background Belief	409
Koyeli Ghosh-Dastidar	:	The Morality of Animals	419
William H. McGowan	:	Berkeley Kicking his own Stones	433
Debabrata Mukhopadhyay	:	On Gettier's Notion of Knowledge and Justification	447
Cassian R. Agera	:	Cut the Syllogism to its Size! Some Reflections on Indian Syllogism	465



BOOKS RECEIVED

Chinchore, Mangala R. ; *Dharmakirti's Theory of Hetu-Centricity of Anumana*, 1989, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi; pp. xvii + 195; Rs. 125/- (HC).

Jhingran, Saral ; *Aspects of Hindu Morality*, 1989, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi; pp. xvii + 241; Rs. 150/- (HC).

Geach, P. T., Shah, K. J. and Jackson A. C. ; *Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology*, 1946-47, 1988, Harvester-Wheatsheaf, London; pp. xv + 348; \$ 61-95 (HC).



**LIFE MEMBERS (Individuals)**

274. Dr. (Miss) M. A. Chingamani,  
140/A, 13th Main Road, 3rd Block East  
Jayanagar,  
BANGALORE 560 011 (Karnatak).
275. Dr. (Mrs) Pratibha Shrivastav,  
Ashirwad Enterprises,  
Near Mahanagar Telegraph Office,  
Faizabad Road,  
LUCKNOW 226 006 (U.P.)
276. Dr. Sunil Kumar Sarkar,  
College Para,  
P. O. Raiganj 733 134,  
West Dinajpur (W. B.).







Compiled  
1998-2000







